Interview with Russell O. Prickett

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RUSSELL O. PRICKETT

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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[Note: This interview has not been edited by Mr. Prickett]

Q: Today is the 24th of March, 1999. This is an interview with Russell O. Prickett. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Russ and I are old colleagues and friends. Russ, could you tell me when and where you were born and then something about your family?

PRICKETT: Yes. I was born in the town of Willmar, Minnesota, way back in 1932, and lived as a child in Norris, Minnesota, which is in the western part of that state. My dad was a teacher at the West Central School of Agriculture, one of those schools that were financed half from federal agricultural funds and half from University of Minnesota funds.

Q: Your mother?

PRICKETT: She was also a teacher, and both Dad and Mom were farm people. They were the first in their families to get a college education. Mom's folks came from Norway, and Dad's had been wandering up and down the Great Plains.

Q: What about Morris? Was it a farming community, or what was it?

PRICKETT: A farming community of about 3,000 souls. It was a stop on the Great Northern Railroad from the Twin Cities out to the Pacific Northwest. It was one of those places that J. J. Hill looked at and said, “I can get rich hauling wheat to market if we can ever get farmers out here to raise wheat.”

Q: So they sponsored trips and got farmers to drop off the train and raise wheat all along there.

PRICKETT: My grandfather, Eriksen, Mom's dad, was one of those young Norwegians who came over and worked on the railroad for a time and then bought bargain-priced farmland from the railroad.

Q: What years were you living in Morris, approximately?

PRICKETT: From '32 to '43.

Q: So you were going to school there.

PRICKETT: In grade school, yes.

Q: What was grade school like?

PRICKETT: Well, we had a lot of the stuff that people are arguing about now, whether for instance music and art and so on are worthwhile things for kids. We didn't have any foreign language instruction, but we had good schooling. It all seemed very ordinary. I can't think of anything in particular. We walked to school, of course, in a small town. If you lived on one side of the town and the school was on the other, I think there were one or two school buses that would take you across the town, maybe the two miles — at most — that it would be.

Q: Was there much of a Scandinavian aura to the town?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. Very much so. There were more Lutheran churches than, as my mother would say, you could shake a stick at. And I think there was one Catholic Church and one federated church between the Congregationalists and the Methodists. But as in later years we had a small share of my mother's family's homestead farm, and the Norwegian folks who lived across the street were farming it and paying us rent. On a visit one time one of their little girls asked my sister, who was a young woman at the time, “Are you Lutheran?” Joyce said, “No, we're Methodist?” And the kid said, “You believe in God, don't you?” And Joyce said, “Yes, of course.” Then, “Well, why aren't you Lutheran?” So yes, there was a Scandinavian influence already. My mother spoke Norwegian in the home. My Grandmother Eriksen never spoke English; Grandfather Eriksen did.

Q: Were there sort of Norwegian festivals and things like that, or was it just —

PRICKETT: No, they were just festivals, because you hardly had to identify the ethnicity of it. There was the Kungsv#nner Church out west of Morris in the little town of Donnelly was totally Norwegian Lutheran, and it was all over the place. It was the way life was, as we understood it.

Q: Well, Russ, I know what you're doing now and what you did when I knew you back in the '60's, how about singing, music? Was there much music in your family and in the school and all, or not?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes, yes. My first grade teacher was an accomplished soprano. My dad was a tenor. He had started singing as a kid in Iowa walking behind the plow, so he had a deep chest, big shoulders, and a tenor voice that just wouldn't quit. A colleague of his at the agricultural school was a good pianist, and so Dad was sort of the shining star as far as singing was concerned. He sang duets with my first-grade teacher, Sally Kreiser, and with somebody else, Joanne Clark, I think. At any rate, there was a lot of community

music going on. I remember one time, we were singing around the piano. My aunt was playing, and suddenly she stopped and turned around. We were all singing, and I was sort of improvising — I had a little unchanged soprano voice — and she turned around suddenly and she said, “Russ just sang a high C.” Well, for me now that's middle C, thank you very much.

Q: Of course, this is the height of the Depression.

PRICKETT: That's right.

Q: You were pretty young, but do you recall the Depression and its effects?

PRICKETT: Yes, we lived in town, and Dad had a very modest salary as a teacher. All of my cousins, and there were a bunch of them, lived on a farm, and they didn't wear shoes in the summer time. They would frequently drop in for a meal in town — not because they didn't eat well, because they did, but they were happy to sell us a quarter or half a side of beef which we'd put in a frozen food locker. We had cash money, a very little of it. They had plenty of goods, but almost no cash money at all. Also in the 30's there was not only the Depression, but there was a pervasive drought, and Dad did his master's thesis in rural sociology on the impact of the drought in western Minnesota. I remember we went to a lake called Pelican Lake, and it was totally dried up. I mean there was just caked mud on the bottom. In later years, of course, it seems it was quite an extensive lake. This was out in the western tip of that little bump on the western side of the Minnesota map that bumps into South Dakota. The Red River of the North is flowing north from there, and the Minnesota River, which feeds into the Mississippi, flows south from there.

Q: What was the big city for you all?

PRICKETT: Oh, it was Minneapolis, or St. Paul. We didn't say “the big city”; we said “the cities.”

Q: The cities.

PRICKETT: The cities. That was Minneapolis and St. Paul. I went down there to get my first pair of glasses. Mom or Dad would go down there for a serious medical checkup. There were a couple of good doctors in town, but you'd go into the cities, and it was about 160 miles. It took four hours to drive before the Eisenhower Freeways were built.

Q: What about reading, I mean as a kid? Did you get into reading?

PRICKETT: Sure. There was a Carnegie library in town —

Q: Bless him.

PRICKETT: — and (yes) I would go to that library and take one stack of books, and the librarian would say, “You can't read all those within the due date time.” Of course, I did and brought them back and got another stack. Pretty soon I had read everything in the library that I was at all interested in, but yes, I'd beat a smooth path to that library.

Q: Was there any particular field of interest that you had? I'm talking about, still, sort of up to '42 or so.

PRICKETT: I was in a couple of plays as a kid that they put on at the agricultural school, which was high-school level. In church and Sunday school they had the holidays, especially the Christmas programs, and everybody would say a piece, recite something like “Why do bells at Christmas ring? Why do little children sing?” et cetera, et cetera. I always seemed to get the longest one of those things to recite. For some years we lived in an apartment in one of the men's dormitories. The English teacher was paying court to, I think, she was the home economics teacher — and he would teach me poems to recite to her. I was one of the instruments of his courtship, and he was also the drama coach.

Q: I hope he married her eventually.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes, yes, yes. Ted and Toni Long. I remember their names.

Q: You were still pretty young, but you were moving around seven by the time World War II started. Was the war much of a topic of conversation there early on, round the dinner table?

PRICKETT: Oh, sure. Well, my older cousins went off in the army, and I remember when my cousin Gerald Dyer came back one time, and I looked at his sleeve and his purple stripe was gone, and I said, “What happened?” Well, he had gotten into some trouble and he said, “I lost my stripes.” I learned later what that meant.

Q: You didn't go looking around the barracks for your stripes.

PRICKETT: No, no, no. It was interesting because later his two younger brothers were in Korea in planes.

Q: Well, you moved out of Morris in '43. Where did you go to high school?

PRICKETT: I went to a school called Murray High School, which is in the northwest corner of St. Paul, sort of cheek by jowl with Minneapolis. It was a junior high school before, and it's a junior high school now, but we had the best academic record in the city because we had a whole lot of professors' kids from the university. That was Dad's status when we moved to St. Paul. He went as assistant state 4-H Club leader, and that was, again, one of these programs that was jointly financed between the University of Minnesota and the US Department of Agriculture. He had associate professor rank when we went there.

Q: So you were in high school from about when to when?

PRICKETT: Well, I graduated in the class of '50.

Q: So that would have been from about '46 to '50.

PRICKETT: Exactly.

Q: How about high school. This was in the big city and all that. Was it a difference?

PRICKETT: Well, I didn't really know the high school at all well back in Morris, although our first grade and kindergarten were in the high school building. But I do have some recollections that it probably wasn't that big a difference. They had a great high school band back in Morris, and I played in the band at Murray when I went there, but I still remember that it was the high school band that inspired me to want to play the cornet.

Q: What was it you were playing in the high school band? Was it the cornet?

PRICKETT: Actually, in junior high I was still trying to play the trumpet or the cornet. I had braces on my teeth, and it made hamburger out of my upper lip, and so I was going to give up the band, and the director said, “No, you don't have to sing every day.” It would have been choir all the time. And so she got me onto the drums. That's what I played, and we all, or most of us, in the junior band played some alternate instrument, and so I was paying what we called the peckhorn. It's an imitation French horn in the key of E-flat instead of F, with slide valves instead of rotary valves.

Q: What were your topics of greatest interest '46 to '50, which is immediate postwar years, of course.

PRICKETT: Well, I was very interested in the social studies, the civics, and English. We had a very good English teacher, and I remember a project where we were basically finding works that were illustrating some life theme or other and make a presentation out of it, something like, Michael Toms and — what's his program called? — “New Dimensions.” Of course, this was at a modest high school student's level. That was fun. I wrote some articles for the student paper, but I was never on the staff. I was president of the band. I was captain of the cross-country team. And I remember my parents saying, “Well, Russell, you can't spread yourself too thin.” I would say silently to myself, why not? I was doing

all kinds of stuff. I never made the basketball team, but we were city champions in cross-country and track.

Q: Did international affairs intrude at all in this Middle-Western life?

PRICKETT: Sure, especially during the war years. Actually the war was over just as I was starting high school, but in grade school and junior high it was there, and so the phrase “after the war” was the big thing. This, that, or the other was “after the war.” You couldn't find anything to buy. Automobiles were not being made. We drove a 1938 Studebaker through the war years. So after the war was going to be Nirvana or something like that. The phrase was on everybody's lips. We had very good newspapers and WCCO and KSTP the broadcast stations were strong on public affairs. The networks were also stronger on public affairs and international affairs, certainly, than the networks are either on radio or TV today. If you listened to the radio you were aware. I wasn't aware — this was back in Morris, of course — but we heard Roosevelt's speech after Pearl Harbor. Dad, who always claimed to be an independent but never admitted to having voted for a Democrat, made very much of the fact that Roosevelt said something like “I declare” — and then paused, because he couldn't declare war, according to Dad — “that a state of war has existed ever since this date that will live in infamy” and so on. So yes, we were very much aware, very well connected. We had just as good radios as folks in the big cities did, and we listened to the University of Minnesota football games on that radio. That was a big thing too. Dad was assistant football coach at the school where he taught in Morris, and when we came down to St. Paul, being a faculty guy, he was able to get faculty tickets. So we attended the football games, the basketball games, the hockey games at the university. Dad had two tickets. Sometimes mom would go with him, sometimes my brother, sometimes me. Bernie Bierman was the much-revered football coach at Minnesota in those days, and he had been, I think, the model for Dad as a coach and for the agricultural engineering teacher who was the football coach at Morris.

Q: What about literature and all? What grabbed you there? History or any —

PRICKETT: We had very good literary anthologies in our English program, and we had a very active library club at the school, and for some reason I didn't get into the library club either, I was so busy doing other stuff. Our seventh and eighth grade classes were in the high school building, and we had many of the same teachers, and one effect of this was that I had the same English teacher for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, and she was very good. Her name was Miss Serat. And by god, I learned the nine rules for the use of the comma, thank you very much. I learned when you use the objective and the subjective case. I would never say that “this was a very good deal for you and I” or anything like that. Those things were really drilled in. And then in my later English years, we had some very strong people on literature, and I recall one time there was an assignment to recite a poem from memory. And the word was out that the requirement was it should be at least 20 lines long. My English class was in the second hour of the day. Band was in the first hour. I was the head of the percussion section by then, and we learned in band from some of our friends who had the English teacher for homeroom that if you memorized your 20 lines you'd get a C. And I thought, Oh, God. So I turned over the drum section to the other kids, and I went back into a side room and took James Weldon Johnson's poem The Creation, and just in that first hour I learned that thing from stem to stern, the one that said, you know,

“And far as the eye of God could see Darkness covered everything, Blacker than a hundred midnights Down in a cypress swamp.”

And way down to the final

“And man became a living soul.Amen. Amen.”

Well, the amens were placed one atop the other, so the poem totaled out 101 lines.

Q: You got and A.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. I wasn't going to get anything less than an A in English class. I got less than an A in a lot of math classes, but not in English or in social studies.

Q: Did any book of any kind or any books leave a particular impression on you? We've had people who are inspired by Kenneth Roberts' books sometimes or Richard Halliburton's. I was wondering whether any particular books that may have stuck in your mind to sort of get you out of Minnesota and think about the world?

PRICKETT: Oh, let's see. I imagine that getting out of Minnesota probably didn't occur to me until I was in college, but I remember being very much affected by A Tale of Two Cities in high school, and I think I probably over-idealized Sidney Carton and became an underachiever for the rest of my life.

Q: You could hardly wait to get executed, eh?

PRICKETT: Or acquired a — what was it? — a self-impairment complex or something like that. Somehow the idea that . . . everything had backspin to it, you know?

Q: Well, then, you graduated in 1950. 1950 was an interesting time to graduate because a gentleman named Kim Il Sung was doing nasty things in Korea just at that time. Did that affect you?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. A lot of my classmates, of course, went into the army, and I went into college and had to fill out form 109 every year, which was that form that certified that you were doing decent college work, and on that basis you got deferred. Both of my cousins, whom I've mentioned, went into the marines, and both came back. But they were at the “great bug-out” when the Chinese came across the Yalu River and practically were going out one end of the tent when the Chinese were coming in the other. I've always had a very strong sense that the guys who went over there, and many of whom did not come back, classmates of mine, that I owed them something for the rest of my life. I felt that they had done the job that had to be done. I don't recall any of us, by the way, ever questioning

that this job had to be done. Certainly, going back to World War II, we were firm on that matter too. Even though there was a fairly substantial German population up in Minnesota and the Dakotas, I don't recall any serious dissent about the war. A few folks were saying, well, we might as well be fighting the Russians, because we're going to have to fight them sooner or later. Some folks picked up on Charles Lindbergh's pro-German-ism and America-first attitude, but it was understated, really. I should go back also and mention that I had an uncle — the husband, actually, of the aunt who played the piano — who was always very outspoken on almost everything, but he didn't make must of a success of his farming. The comment was always, as my dad would say about him, “Well, if Ed could do well with his own business, maybe all of his pronouncements on national and world affairs would carry a little weight.” So that's just by way of recalling that there was a good bit of discussion of public and world affairs in the family amongst the relatives and so on.

Q: Well, in 1950 you then went to university for four years, is it? '50 to '54.

PRICKETT: Yes, I went to school called Hamline University, whose only claim to being a university back then was that it also had a nursing school. Since then they have a law school and they've got other multi-faceted aspects of being a university. But it was a school of about 1,200, including the school of nursing, affiliated with the Methodist Church located in St. Paul. Mom and Dad figured that they were making a considerable sacrifice when they moved to the big city. They were essentially small town folks; Dad, particularly. He had gone to Hamline, too, by the way, and he was from a fundamentalist family that was afraid that by going to this school, that was basically producing most of the Methodist ministers in the state; he might lose his faith because he was going to a big town. So there was a lot of this country mouse mentality in our family at the time. We kids loved it. We had a ball.

Q: I would have thought that you would have aimed for the University of Minnesota.

PRICKETT: Well, you see, everybody went to the University of Minnesota, especially from our high school, which was in the shadow of both campuses, the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses. Dad worked at the St. Paul campus, which is where the Agricultural College was. The talk among us kids was, “Well, where are you going to go to college? I don't know, I suppose I'll go to the factory.” Something in me didn't really want to do that, but it took me until the spring of my senior high school year before I had really made up my mind where I was going to go. Someone had come up from Carleton College and said it would only cost X thousand dollars for my parents to send me there, and my parents didn't have X thousand dollars. They figured that they were making the big sacrifice, as I said, by going to the city, where there were many colleges, in Minneapolis and St. Paul. There was Hamline; there was McAllister, where Hubert Humphrey taught for a time. There was the University, and there was a Lutheran college called Concordia and two Catholic colleges, St. Thomas and St. Catherine's, for the men and the women. The folks figured that there were plenty of good education to be had right there. We could live at home and go to school, and that was their contribution to our college. It worked well for me. I hitchhiked to a lot of classes and missed a lot of eight-o'clocks on that account. Hitchhiking, by the way, at 30 below in the wintertime in Minnesota is no bed of roses.

Q: No, it's challenging.

PRICKETT: Yes, as Garrison Keillor says it, it's still a virtue in all of us.

Q: At Hamline, what was happening? What was life on the campus like?

PRICKETT: It was, I guess, from the point of view of today's campuses, it was quite an interesting place. Friends of mine considered it quite scandalous that when the snow thawed in the spring you actually saw a lot of beer cans emerging from under the windows of the men's dorm. That was heavy stuff. We never had beer, by the way, at a high school dance. If anybody was caught with hit he was out. Of course, the Methodists have, since John Wesley's time, been opposed to alcohol, at least in theory. When I go back to

reunions I see they do have wine-and-cheese parties now at the various departmental gatherings. Hamline had a very strong fine arts program in both the visual arts and music, and excellent orchestra. There were two others led by a man who became for a time the assistant conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony and an a cappella choir that toured all around the country, 55 voices. Oh, yes, and a world-class basketball team, which had won a small-college tournament I think, three or four times. The University of Minnesota would never meet them on the basketball court. They had played all over from Hawaii to Madison Square Garden. Laverne Nicholson, who had a career in the NBA was one of the stars. He also sang in the a cappella choir. I was lucky enough to get into that my freshman year, so besides doing some theater I sang in the choir.

Q: When you came out in '54, you're degree was in what?

PRICKETT: Political science.

Q: Political science. What moved you towards political science?

PRICKETT: I guess I'd had a strong and increasing interest in civic affairs, which had dated basically through high school, and while I loved music, I had two thoughts about it. My dad, who is a fine singer, as I said, always said he loved music too much to make his career at it, to have to depend on it for a living, and I was affected by that, I think. But I also thought, having taken some piano lessons and some lessons on the trumpet, that music was hard work. I sort of shied away from something that would be that hard to do, and to jump ahead just a little bit, I am convinced that God has a sense of humor because I wound up at the Harvard Law School.

Q: Well, during the time you were at Hamline, this was also the height of McCarthyism. Did that intrude at all on the political science?

PRICKETT: It was. Oh, yes. I had a couple of very good friends who lived on campus and we'd get over to their room and we'd turn on the TV and watch the Army-McCarthy

Hearings. While I had sort of had the idea that I was going to be a lawyer anyway, watching Joseph Welch in those hearing was really inspiring. In fact, just to pop back a minute to the spring of 1946, time was running out, and I finally took myself over to Hamline to see where I was going to go to college, and the dean of admissions, a man named Arthur Williamson, darned if he didn't pull out a file — it was my file. He said, “Now, Russ, were you valedictorian in high school?” I said, “Oh, no.” “Some girl beat you out?” he said. “Well,” I said, “it was more than that.” I was, I think, ninth in a class of about 200 or whatever. He said, “Well, what did you have in mind?” Well, I had seen in the catalogues this program where you did two years and then transferred over to the university and took a bachelor of arts or science and law degree. So I was interested in the two-year pre-law program, and he said, “I don't think that's for you.” He said, “What you really need to do is first get your liberal arts degree, and then get your professional training after that.” I took that seriously. I thought that wasn't a bad idea, and that's the way it turned out for me.

Q: How was Hamline political-wise during that time? Conservative? Was McCarthy striking positive notes there?

PRICKETT: No. Very little, anyway. In the presidential campaign of 1952 we had a mock political convention, and my debate coach finally twisted my arm and got me into the Harriman campaign — Averell Harriman. We sang his campaign song on our campus, which was the old Irish song Harrigan, and “the divil take the man who votes agin' he.” Earl Warren actually won the contest, and I had started out as a Warren fancier. Of course, Harold Stassen was big stuff in those days. He had the record of having been the youngest governor in the history of the country, at age 29, so there was a Stassen contingent. There may have been some Bob Taft supporters too. But it came to a showdown between Harriman and Warren, which means that we were in those days pretty middle of the road. These days, of course, especially in this state, we'd all be called flaming liberals.

Q: This interview, by the way, is being done in Austin, Texas.

PRICKETT: And most of the folks who would say that wouldn't say “flaming.”

Q: Well, you graduated in 1954, and then what?

PRICKETT: And then I went to law school, to Harvard.

Q: Was it hard to get in at that time? I mean, things keep changing. I was wondering.

PRICKETT: Well, let's see. They were accepting. . . . Oh, let's pop back a bit, if we may. My first association with Yugoslavia was while I was still at Hamline. There's a college study abroad program in Minnesota. There were some 10 colleges taking part in it, and it was most common to take a summer abroad between your junior and senior year. I had set my sights either on that or a Washington semester at American University, which is also Methodist-affiliated and our people from colleges around the country were spending a semester there. I was looking at both and for some reason went with a SPAN Program — Student Project for Amity among Nations — and each year they picked a handful of countries, and you would apply and be selected or not to take part in this program a full year in advance of the summer before you traveled, so that you had year to prepare yourself for that project. And so I applied and was accepted, and the year that I got into that, the countries that people were going to were India, the UK (Great Britain), Spain, and Yugoslavia. Well, I was so snobbish that I thought going to England would be like going to the library. India didn't hold a lot of interest for me and was the most expensive place to go to. There were going to be scholarships that might pay from a fourth to a third of the total cost of a trip, but it was a lot for transportation. As for going to Spain, most of the people who were interested in that had taken a lot of high school Spanish. I had taken Latin in high school but not Spanish. Besides, Yugoslavia was a very interesting place. It was between East and West and all of that. And we had the intervening year to study Serbo-Croatian, for which we went over to the University of Minnesota. There were 10 of us in the program from various colleges. I was the only one from Hamline. Hamline, McAllister, and the University of Minnesota were the main ones that I remember in that

program. I was going to spend my summer working on the Bractvoje Dienstvo Autopuk, the highway between Belgrade and Zagreb. They had international student brigades doing labor on that. I think they found, however, that it wasn't cost-effective labor, and so before I got there they canceled the international student participation in that project. I wound up doing a study of local government around and about throughout Yugoslavia. I was down in Skopje; I was at Dubrovnik — I didn't leave that out, certainly; and up in Ljubljana and asking a series of questions about how local government worked. Of course, I found that they were all cookie-cutter duplicates, but it was, nevertheless, interesting to see how they worked out their governmental theory. So that was my first taste of the country where we both served.

Q: Well, what was your impression of Yugoslavia. This is the first time way out in the big world, wasn't it? And this would have been what, about '53 or so?

PRICKETT: This was the summer of '53.

Q: What was your impression of Yugoslavia at that time?

PRICKETT: Well, walking through Belgrade from the Studencki Dom down around Boulevard Revolucija up to the American embassy to pick up our mail we passed what passed for their Pentagon in those days, a very low old building with a stone wall yard; and I was very much impressed with the very businesslike automatic weapons that the guards carried. I met a number of young people, of course. It was very interesting. They were poor. You saw the film When Father Was Away on Business.” It was from that era, and those open light bulbs hanging in the public buildings or in the private places, the very rudimentary facilities that people had, that took me right back to '53. It was just after the war. The bullet scars were on the buildings. There were still ruins around and about that hadn't been rebuilt. Yugoslavia was only five years after Tito's break with Stalin.

Q: '48, yes.

PRICKETT: By the way, the Trieste issue was very much alive, and while I was there, I think, the US decided that issue. Neither the Italians nor the Yugoslavs could agree on that for their domestic political reasons. A solution had to be imposed from outside, that made it acceptable to both of them — the Zone A, Zone B thing — the solution to Trieste. There was an organized gang that actually threw stones at the embassy back in those days, and I remember one member of our student group started sort of holding seminars with Yugoslav students explaining it, and she got sent home. So that was the most severe aspect, I think. Otherwise, we, most all of us, traveled the full extent of the country, from Lake Ohrid in the south way up to Lake Bled in the north and all along the coast. Since we were going by public transportation, we never ran into any of those forbidden military districts that we sometimes encountered later on when we were driving around in our own cars. But the freedom of movement was just as great, really, as when we were there in the '60's. There was a lot of idealism among the young people. I met one young woman. She was about the age of my kid brother, and she had just graduated from high school, and she said, “I'm going to be a movie star.” She took me on a tour. I met her because I had met her brother doing black-market currency transactions. In those days the official rate of exchange for the old dinar was 250, it think, or 300 to the dollar, and we could get 450 or 500 trading with these students. He was a manager for the Yugoslav fencing team, and they would take the hard currency that they made on the black market with them overseas, and they'd buy things like cigarette lighters and silk stockings and so forth and bring them back into the country, sell them for dinars, and buy another supply of dollars. So these idealistic socialist students were engaged in capitalist currency exchange. We played a lot of ping pong. That's what the fencers did to relax and keep their reflexes tuned up.

At any rate, I met this poor guy, George Nikolic, who later worked in our embassy, and met his sister, who took me on a walking tour of Belgrade. When we passed the drama academy she said, “That's where I'm going next year, and I'm going to be a movie star.” When I returned in '64, Mira Nikolic was a film star whose performances had won awards

in Cannes. She was the star of a famous film, Pitne Nitarajev, Five Minutes of Paradise, and it was really quite an interesting phenomenon.

Q: What was your feeling when you left Yugoslavia? I mean, was one filled with the horrors of Communism, or were you just saying, "Yugoslavia is different," from what you were hearing?

PRICKETT: A bit of both, I think. This family that I mentioned — the daughter who was going to be in the movies and so on — her brother George is a very intense guy, and he said, "My father is a doctor of medicine, my mother has a master's in pharmacy but we don't always have enough to eat." There was a sense that people who had been established before the war, or under the old regime, were taking it on the chin. Of course it was a gorgeous country, and the people were very attractive. Although I wasn't spending time elsewhere in war-ravaged Europe, it was easy to believe that all of this, all of the basic if not primitive circumstances, were due to Communism rather than the fact that this was basically not a rich country. That had just come through a devastating war. But I certainly did emerge with a strong and continuing interest in what was going on there, and of course the heroism of the Yugoslavs, standing up to Stalin, was a big thing. The intrigue was how they could be open to us and still call themselves Communist. So it was a mixed sense. I did talk with some of the officers in the embassy. I remember one, I think, a political officer asked me, "What do American young people think about the Foreign Service?" I said, "Well, gee, I don't know." "Well, what do you think about the Foreign Service?" I said I'd never given it any thought, and I hadn't. So I don't know whether that was the seed that ultimately sprouted, or not, but that was the first though that had ever been given. Of course, at that time, the Foreign Service was in the real doldrums because McCarthy was pressing down heavily on the Foreign Service. Vincent and Service and so on had their careers ruined, and I remember my humanities and history professor at Hamline when I told him, from law school, that I was going to take the Foreign Service

Exam and go in if I could, “Well, you're going in at a time of probably the lowest possible morale and esteem for the Foreign Service in our history.”

Oh, one interesting thing on this Belgrade walking tour. We went to Kalemegdan, the fortress at the confluence of the Sava and Danube Rivers, and we looked across to the plains where New Belgrade was to sprout, but it hadn't yet. No only that, but the Federal Executive Council Building was nothing but a skeleton. And there were jokes and theories about why that was. The official line was that they had started this very ambitious building but the break with Stalin had had a very negative impact on their economy and they weren't able to continue with such a big public project. Another story was that they had started it on that low ground over across next to the river, had discovered that their footings and foundations were sinking, and had to call it off. And the one I liked the best was that they claimed they had gone immediately from capitalism to Communism — they didn't have to mess with the intervening stages — and so it was allowed to stand as a monument to the withering away of the state.

Q: Well, you were at Harvard Law School from when to when?

PRICKETT: '54 to '57.

Q: What was it like?

PRICKETT: There were two women in our class, or in our section, actually. There were 1500 in each of the three-year classes. The first year class was divided into three sections of 500 each. No, I've got it a dimension too high. The whole law school was about 1500 or 2000, and each class was 500 divided into three sections, in which there were two women in our section. Nowadays it's almost evenly matched. We were just past the era where the dean would famously say to the class of incoming students, “Look well to the right of you, look well to the left of you, because one of you will not be here next year.” Just about everybody was passing. Partly that was because of weeding out two-thirds of the

applicants. When I misspoke a minute ago, the 1500 that was in my mind was about the number of applicants from which they selected the class of 500.

It was heavy going. As a young guy who had always done well in my studies without much effort, it was a little bit like being a polar bear swimmer, jumping into real competition. And I was at best a mediocre law student, with the exception of a few subjects that I did well in. It could happen, I recall, one fellow asked if he could look at another guy's notes for the previous day, which he had missed, and the fellow just drew himself up and said, “Of course not. We're competing.” So there was a bit of that.

Q: Well, what led you to go to law school?

PRICKETT: Oh, I think I'd always been a bit of a talker, and my differences with my parents I would seek to resolve by giving reasons for things. Also, let's see, one of my Sunday school teachers in my high school years was a lawyer, and so it seemed to be the most logical outlet for talents that I had, again excepting music. I think I'd accepted my dad's reflections that music wasn't necessarily the place to make a living, and I didn't think that music was serious. Somehow I wanted to be involved in the serious business of the world, and so being a lawyer, especially after observing the advocacy during the Army-McCarthy Hearings, struck me right. I had some kind of sense that you didn't just go right into being a college professor, that somehow you maybe had to serve an apprenticeship as a high school teacher first, and I never explored that.

Q: In the first place, would you say that you were still part of what was termed later “the silent generation”? People came out of World War II and kind of got on with it. They didn't do an awful lot of introspection of “Why am I here?” and “What am I doing?” and a lot of ME. You got on with the job. You had to make a living, and you just sort of got on.

PRICKETT: Well, I was always of a kind of philosophical bent, I guess, and asking questions of that sort, but not in a public way. Of course, there was always that Form 109. You did not take to the streets in those days because you would find yourself in Korea very

quickly. And the draft continued, of course, for years thereafter. So if you were going to go to grad school, there were good reasons to keep your nose to the grindstone and go immediately from college to whatever grad school or professional school you were going to do. I was certainly glad that I served my army hitch after law school rather than before. So those were some of the objective circumstances, as the Stanislavski acting people would classify it.

Q: There may be more, but I can see sort of three sort of major reasons why someone would, say, go to Harvard Law School. I mean, it is the preeminent law school in the United States. One, those that go there because, by God, their parents went there or, I mean, this is where one goes, and really without much thought; two, this is the place — wow — to make a lot of money because this is the best law school; and the other one is to do good. But were any of these playing around at that time, or how was it?

PRICKETT: Oh, sure, sure. The first and the third were strong in my mind. Also, on my way back from Yugoslavia in that summer of '53, I stopped in New York and I went up — I had by then been, I think, accepted both at Harvard and at Yale — and so I went up and toured both of the campuses. Frankly, the atmosphere at Yale was more congenial to a liberal arts graduate — or a liberal arts student, which I was then — than was Harvard. I remember Dean Tupfer saying — oh, I'd applied to go, that was it — he looked at me with kind of a fishy-eyed stare, the dean of admissions at Harvard Law, “If you get in,” he said, though in my arrogance, I was thinking, that's not the question; the question is where I'd choose to go. It wound up that Harvard offered more scholarship money, and I figured that I could maybe afford it. They had these so-called national scholarships because they were looking for “diversity,” as we call it now, to get away from the Eastern Seaboard. They hadn't gotten into ethnic diversity.

Q: I remember. And of course, Minnesota was the back of beyond, wasn't it?

PRICKETT: No, no, not really. The Minnesota Law School was a respected school nationally, but it wasn't in the league of Michigan or Virginia or Stanford or California at Berkeley.

Q: — Columbia —

PRICKETT: — Columbia, of course. Yes, there were a lot of people out there who sort of looked at Minnesota that way, but we knew that we were nearer the center of the country around which the rest revolved.

Q: I remember around that time — I'm a little older than you — but everybody felt that you had it made if you were from Nevada, because that would sort of fill out a chunk if they were checking off things.

PRICKETT: Yes, I came close on something like that because I was nominated for a Rhodes Scholarship and missed it by one. I was next to a guy from Minnesota who then went on the '68 regionals and got in. So, yes, there was some regional stuff going on that I wasn't aware of .

Q: Well, there was the famous movie, book, and television series called The Paper Chase, which somebody. . . . Was that pretty accurate as far as how things worked at that time?

PRICKETT: Ha, ha, ha. I'm sure it was, and one of the reasons I'm sure it was that I had already had enough law school, so that I hardly ever watched it. I just didn't need to relive those years. But there were legendary stories of verbal abuse of students by professors, and of course, we all told them the way people tell their war stories. You're sort of proud of having survived it.

Q: Well, was it a pretty workmanlike atmosphere, or was there much sort of intellectual, other than sort of legal intellectual, discourse? Or was it pretty much nose-to-the-grindstone.

PRICKETT: Nose-to-the-grindstone was the rule. It really was. And I wasn't a nose-to-the-grindstone kind of guy, so that as I say, I only made a mediocre record. I did succeed in staying in, both partly by achievement and partly by inertia, because there were people who were perfectly intellectually capable but after a year of it decided it wasn't for them.

Q: What about international law? Was there anything going around in your mind about foreign affairs or anything?

PRICKETT: Yes, yes, yes. The first year we didn't have any elective courses. We took the basic stuff — contacts and torts and administrative law and property and agency and probably a couple of others. But by second year, then, we were taking elective courses as well, and while the guys who were going to make money were taking advanced courses in wills, corporate law, taxation, and oil and gas, I was taking international law and a seminar on constitutional and international law, so I was pointing towards that. I was also able to take an advanced Serbo-Croatian course over at the College and get law school credit for it. And I took a seminar in what has since been renamed the JFK Center on the formation of foreign policy. I don't remember the professor's name now — I should, I can see him right in front of me. But this was at the Littauer Center, as it was then called. So I was definitely considering it. I first heard the Foreign Service recruiters when I was in the middle of my second year of law school, and I telephoned my then fianc#e that I was going to take the Foreign Service Exam and if I got in that's what I was going to do. I didn't ask her how she felt about it. I had that very day been to a property class in which the professor was talking about something called a short-term trust. And in those days, inflation having been such, he said, “Now, suppose you had a client with an income of, say, $50,000.” (That's about a quarter of a million dollars today.) “$50,000 sounds like a lot of money.” And then he went on to explain that, however, if you lived in a decent neighborhood, belonged to the right clubs, got your kids a good education and so forth, well, the poor chap just couldn't put anything by that you could set aside for him and have it tax free, or not have to pay tax on the income from it. And so I was thinking about that

time, is this what I want to spend my life doing, saving these multimillionaires tax dollars? Then I heard the Foreign Service recruiting pitch that very same evening, and I thought, you know, both in terms of substance and client, I can do better than that.

Q: When did you take the Foreign Service Exam?

PRICKETT: I took the Foreign Service Exam — oh, let's see, I signed up and then the first chance I had, I believe, was the fall of '56 — no, I took it in June of '56 because I was married just after taking the exam. When you applied to take the exam, you had to state whether you were married or no, and I was not. And if you were married to a non-citizen of the United States, then you couldn't take the exam. Well, my first wife was the daughter of one Von Braun's rocket scientists.

Q: This is Hilti.

PRICKETT: Hilti [Hiltrun] Hermann, then, yes, and Rudolf Hermann was her dad. He was the founder of the Space Flight Center at the University of Alabama at Huntsville. They had entered the United States on the famous “Operation Paper Clip,” and that meant that they didn't have any legal status.

Q: Explain what Operation Paper Clip was.

PRICKETT: At the end of World War II, the United States and Russia, basically, glommed onto as many of the best minds — especially defense-related minds — in Germany as they could. And it's a whole 'nother story how that worked out in their case, but basically, they loaded them on a plane and brought them over here — no formalities, no customs, no passport control, no passports, nothing. They wound up at Wright Field, Ohio. And it was funny, because Rudolf Hermann, my late ex-father-in-law, was the external aerodynamicist on the V-2 rocket, and in his work preparing that thing, he had invented the supersonic wind tunnel to test the thing. He had the neatest paperweight you ever saw. This was not just a replica of the V-2; this was the wind-tunnel model of the V-2 — and this was

his paperweight on his office desk! Well, they had come over in '47, and what with one delay and another — Rudolf was sometimes pretty acerbic in describing the delays and bungling of our bureaucracy (of course, he came from a very efficient bureaucracy) — but I always figured that the situation was this: that there were an awful lot of war brides and others who needed documentation before they could get into the States, and for those people who were already in, a lower priority was assigned in processing their paperwork. So by 1953, their family all bundled up and crossed over into Canada at Niagara Falls and made their “formal entry” into the United States. That meant that by '56, when I took the exam, Hilti had only been in the country formally for three years, although it was really six years. So I had applied to take the exam before I was married. We got married, and on our honeymoon I had thought, well, should I take my French book along to study for the French part of the written Foreign Service Exam? I think I took it along and never opened it, fortunately —

Q: Oddly enough.

PRICKETT: Then I passed the written, and then it was when I was in my third year of law school that I took the first oral exam. I read the New York Times every day for a year and really focused on all of that stuff, and I remember the first oral exam very well.

Q: Tell me about it. Let us recapture this.

PRICKETT: Well, it was a three-on-one exam, and there were gentlemen named Dow, Horns, and Daspitt who sat opposite me behind their desk, and it was a very gentle exam compared to what we administer now. The first questioning had to do with what my background was. Then, on the second round, they kind of probed to see what I might have gotten out of that background. And so on the second round I think it was Dow who said, “Well, Mr. Prickett, you're in law school, you were state champion debater in college, you were this and this and this and this — this seems to me that it points you more towards a career in law than to the Foreign Service? What have you got to say to that?” And I

said, “Well, Mr. Dow, would those things that you mentioned disqualify me for the Foreign Service?” The other guys got a good laugh out of it, and I felt gratified. I don't think I endeared myself to Mr. Dow. But that was the tenor of the exam, and it was a breeze. At the end of it they said, “Well, now, Mr. Prickett, your wife is not an American citizen, and so we're going to give you what we call a deferred waiver, and that means that we're going to see you again in not less than one and not more than two years' time, and we usually do this when we assess that an officer may have the stuff we're after but lacks a little something in maturity or seasoning.” “But we are going to recommend — “ that's what he said — or “We're going to say that we would have passed you but for this circumstance.” That became a clich# later on, a kind of a shibboleth word, but I think he used it seriously. That was my situation.

The second time around, I didn't prepare a whole lot, and one of the first questions out of the box was, “Mr. Prickett, would you define for us the difference between the international balance of trade and the international balance of payments?” In those days I was not an economist, and I fumbled around most awfully. I was doing investigative work for the law firm I was employed by, and I had a briefcase full of investigation files, and when I came out — in those days, by the way, they told you right away; you didn't have to wait for notice by mail. You went off and sweated it out while they decided your fate. This is what had happened the first time, and this was what happened the second time too. Ernie Stanger was the economist specialist in the second one. That's the only name I remember because I worked with Ernie later on over in Vienna. But I came out of that one, and I just pulled out a file or two and figured I better focus on my law career, thank you very much. Then they came out and they said that they had accepted me but I should probably brush up on my economics. Of course, I became an economic officer later on and went to the Foreign Service Economics Course and consider myself an economist now.

Q: Well, they must have been used to that, because when I took it — I took it in '54, I think — when I came out they said, “You'd better do something about your economics.”

PRICKETT: Later, when I was on the Board of Examiners, I became one of the toughest examiners they had in the economics field.

Q: Well, were you at all torn between a law career and a Foreign Service career when offered the real alternative?

PRICKETT: When the telegram came saying I was accepted into the Foreign Service, it didn't take me any time at all to answer. I had already made up my mind, I think. I was working for a large law firm in Minneapolis, a trial firm, and had my goal to be a trial lawyer. Then they went through a RIF, a reduction in force, and I was the last guy to be taken on, and they were going to expand into tax work, and they took on somebody who already had experience, and they needed to give him work to do until they built up their tax practice. So I was out. There was a small firm, run by a brilliant younger lawyer who was close friends with my then father-in-law, and I think I could have gotten a place in their firm, but a junior lawyer is a real economic burden on a small firm, and so, I took a job — because I knew it was chancy. I might get the call to the Foreign Service, and I think I had decided by then that if it came I was going to go. But what was I going to do in the meantime? Well, I went to work for West Publishing Company, which is the world premier legal publishing house, and it's headquartered in St. Paul. And so after I'd been with them for several months, the telegram came from Washington, and we packed up and went out there and joined the Service in April of '59.

Q: Did you get military? Did that happen before or after?

PRICKETT: I took the Dan Quayle route through the military. I was in the National Guard and I did six months active duty for training, from the fall of '57 to the spring of '58, and then I was admitted —

Q: Minnesota National Guard?

PRICKETT: Minnesota National Guard, an artillery battalion. And when I came out of my active duty, I transferred to an army reserve unit in military government. I don't know if you want to hear, but I had a very interesting military career, because —

Q: Sure, let's grab everything we can.

PRICKETT: Well, shortly after I got back from my six months at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, I got a letter from — was it Indian Gap?

Q: Yes, Indian Gap, Pennsylvania.

PRICKETT: — Pennsylvania, which invited me to choose a time for my. . . . no, no, no, I'm sorry. I did served a two-week stint in Minnesota in the National Guard, and then it was after that that I transferred, and it was after I went to Washington that I got the letter from — is it Indian Head Gap or Indian Gap? — It was something Gap.

Q: I think it's Indian Town Gap. I'm not sure. Something like that. But anyway —

Q: I got this letter from Pennsylvania inviting me to pick a couple of weeks (or they would pick it for me) for when I would do my service. Aaron S. Brown was then the deputy director of State personnel, and he was issuing letters to people in these circumstances pointing out that since we had commissions that were nominated by the President and approved by the Senate, we came under a provision of law that was probably intended for people of more exalted rank than we, but we came under it anyway, that we were eligible to serve, I think, in what was called the “standby” reserve, rather than the active reserve. And so I pointed all this out in my letter, and enclosed a copy of the letter from Ambassador Brown and sent it off and didn't hear anything. Well, then, I got my first assignment, which was to the US mission to the Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, and I had been there for a little while, and I got a letter from one Lieutenant Howard Himmelreich in Germany — what's the great university town?

Q: Heidelberg.

PRICKETT: Heidelberg. Howard Himmelreich in Heidelberg. And it said, basically, the same thing: “We didn't use to have facilities for summer drills for our reservists who happened to be residing in Europe, but now we have these facilities, and so we invite you choose a time for your summer army training, or we'll chose a time for you,” and so forth. Well, I composed my letter and got out another copy of Ambassador Brown's letter and said, “As you can see from the enclosed. . . . “ da-da-da “my reason for not serving in the training camp is not your lack of facilities but because I've got a Foreign Service commission, which. . . .” and so forth and so on. And I never heard anything. And then I was transferred from Vienna to Basle, Switzerland, where we had a two-man consulate. And darned if several months later I didn't get another letter from Lieutenant Howard Himmelreich in Heidelberg saying the same thing, which I answered to the same effect, and again didn't hear anything further. And then in '62, it was, I had a direct transfer from Vienna, because my predecessor in Basle had been selected out. But in the summer of '62 I was transferred back to the States to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and I'd been back in Washington for a little while, and damned if there didn't come another letter from Indian Gap, Pennsylvania, saying the same darned thing: pick your two-week period or we'll pick it for you. And I sent my standard answer back and didn't hear and didn't hear and didn't hear. Then one day there arrived this great big manila envelope with this Department of the Army return address on it, and I thought, jeez, here we go again, and I opened it up, and it was my honorable discharge.

Q: Well, let's go into, you came into the Foreign Service when in '59?

PRICKETT: Late April.

Q: What was your Foreign Service class like. It's called the A-100 course for some reason, but I mean the basic officer course.

PRICKETT: Well, Brandon Grove was a member of the class. Jim Hackett was a member of the class who later became the director of administration for USIA, I believe. And there were 26 of us.

Q: Any women, any minorities?

PRICKETT: Two women, no minorities. And very bright, impressive folks. It was a fun time to be in Washington. I don't believe I had a suit of clothes to my name. I had one sports jacket and a few compatible pairs of pants and one daughter and one wife, and we set up housekeeping in a small apartment in Falls Church right near Seven Corners. Al Holmes was a member of the class.

Q: I'm interviewing him next week.

PRICKETT: His dad, of course, had had a run-in with the McCarthyites, which kept him from becoming ambassador, and so he had for some time been consul general in Hong Kong. Auchan Taylor was a member of the class. Auchan turned out to be my best friend of longest standing in the Foreign Service. They were bright, fun people. When we had our class presentation to make on some subject, I was impressed that most of the folks could have gone on one of the major networks as an anchor, being very articulate and with very well organized minds — certainly, in the dimensions that I respected and was familiar with, more than a match for any of my law school colleagues, or classmates. So I was very much impressed. A couple of us took to going down to Campbell's Music Store on Monday mornings to stand in line for tickets to hear the Budapest String Quartet, and we'd arrive — this was after the A-100 course — we'd arrive a little late for our German class, and it was a good trade-off.

By the way, I lobbied rather hard. I was first assigned to French training, and I lobbied rather hard to get into German training instead, mainly because it would affect my assignment, and my wife was German. And I managed that successfully.

Q: Hilti had become an American citizen.

PRICKETT: She had become a citizen by then, of course. I thought it would be a whole lot better for both of us if we went to a German-speaking post, and a lot of the French speakers were going to Africa. That's where Brandon went. I think Al Holmes went there on his first shot, too. And the Spanish speakers were going to upcountry places in South American locations. And of course, I got the hardship assignment of all, to Vienna.

Q: Well, one has to take the bitter with the sweet. Could you give a feel for the spirit of the times when you came in. I mean, I don't know if you can characterize the other people. Is this a job? Are you off on a crusade? Was this an adventure? What did you think this was?

PRICKETT: I was thrilled to be joining the Foreign Service. I had said in my oral exam that I was really prompted by the service aspect of it and the idea that my skills might jibe with some serious national needs, and to be in a field that I really was intrigued by, and with all that's gone on since, I've never really regretted it. I might have been a college professor if I'd known what the story was there, but it's been great. The cross-cultural thing has always been. . . . and I was less aware of that, of course, when I chose to go in, but it's been the big feature since. But that was about the time that my history and humanities professor back at Hamline had said, “Well, Russ, you're joining the Service at about the nadir of its reputation and morale.” He had some acquaintances, I think, already in the Service who were not happy. But I wasn't deterred by that. I thought, Well, we'll get in, we'll do some good stuff.”

Q: Well, as you got in there, this is about the time when Dulles was leaving because of his fatal illness and Herter was coming in. Was there a feeling, were you picking up any residue, echoes of the McCarthy times and the fact that Scott MacLeod had been an unfortunate influence within the security apparatus, or was that kind of gone by?

PRICKETT: I think it had basically gone by, but of course it had really intensified the kind of security briefings that we got. The famous microphone behind the eagle in the ambassador's office in Moscow was part of the show-and-tell that they gave us when we came in. The story of what's-his-name who was admin officer in Warsaw and got trapped in the honey pot entrapment there was part of the story. So I think what we got was kind of the backwash from it, but not the direct impact. But we certainly received very serious security briefings.

Q: Was there the feeling at that time that you were entering a Cold War, that the Soviets and the Communists were the enemy and this was the major influence?

PRICKETT: Partly. That certainly wasn't beamed into us intensively during the A-100 course, and in language class, of course, we focused on the language. In the assignment to the IAEA in Vienna, we were working on a maybe more idealistic aspect, seeking out relationships and so forth. The resident head of the Russian mission was V. I. Molotov, and it was an interesting thing, you know, to meet him at a reception. He was by then quite out of favor in the Soviet system, but he was still, by God, Molotov. One of my first jobs as administrative officer was to handle the social arrangements and so on for a meeting of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, and the US governor came over from Washington — he wasn't resident in Vienna — and he wanted to do a dinner for the 52 or however many governors there were, and so I had to do the seating for that dinner. And there were many different categories, or people wore a lot of different hats in Vienna. Some countries' representatives were also that country's representative to Austria. Others were, like ours, resident in Vienna but had separate credentials to the international organization. Admiral Paul Foster was our rep. Some were maybe deputy chief of mission in their country's embassy and they were the representative. Others were cabinet officers, the cabinet officer responsible for atomic energy in their related countries. So this was a real rats' nest of protocol seating. And then some were from big countries and some were from little countries. Then there was Molotov. How do you deal with him? I think, well, I put him to

somebody's left, pretty high ranking, but on the left side — not with political puns intended. But that was the kind of thing that was happening.

Q: You were in Vienna from when to when?

PRICKETT: '59 to '61 — a year and a half, roughly.

Q: What was your job there?

PRICKETT: I was the administrative officer to the US mission, and I believe it was a seven-officer mission. There was the chief, Admiral Foster; there was a senior scientific advisor; there was a senior political advisor — who was Mose Harvey, by the way, and he was chosen for his Soviet expertise, and he was definitely a hard-liner. He was one of George Kennan's ideological opponents in the State Department. He was hired out of academe, I think, directly into an FSO-1 slot, which is not the FS-1 slot today.

Q: It's equivalent to two-star general.

PRICKETT: Two-star general. Yes, and then there were two other scientific advisors and one other, no, two other political advisors, and I was the low man on that totem pole. Then there was a chief clerk and three or four very excellent secretaries.

Q: Well, what was the mission of the mission at that time? The American — what was it called?

PRICKETT: The big project — and it was an overriding project — was to create the system that we've heard quite a lot about lately, which was international atomic safeguards. And that was the big thing. The Indians were much opposed. The Russians hadn't yet seen it in their advantage to have atomic safeguards, so the Indian representative would say, “This is paternalism, Mr. Chairman.” And the Russians were happy to fish in those troubled waters, and. . . .

Q: This is Tape 2, Side 1, with Russ Prickett. Russ, you know, at a certain point we found ourselves on nuclear matters, that was one place where we were really with the Soviet at a certain point. We mainly wanted to keep other people from messing around in this field. It was too damned dangerous, so we had joint reason. But I take it we hadn't reached that point.

PRICKETT: No. We did make some progress, but I don't believe we completed the international safeguards. But I think we saw that we could. We'd had serious talks. The head of Atomic Energy in India, a man named Baba, was making a bomb. We knew it. The Russians knew it. We knew it was just a matter of time, so it was an awkward thing. Basically, the Russians were siding with the LDC's who were opposed, and it was mainly the Indians. Nobody was paying attention to what the Israelis were doing, but I think the experts knew. So it didn't happen, I think, until after I left Vienna.

We did have one other very interesting adventure while I was there. They borrowed some of us from the international organization mission to work on what was sometimes called the Zweiter Wienerkongress, the Protocol on Diplomatic Immunity, and we did negotiate that, and so I was again a very low-ranking gofer officer type on our delegation to the “Second Congress of Vienna.”

Q: Well, how did you find Austria? By the time you arrived it had been four years into its neutral role with the occupying powers gone. What was Austria like then?

PRICKETT: Well, it was very comfortable, of course. It was lovely. Their Autobahn was only in patches. There was still some residual pro-Nazi sentiment in Austria and one of the jokes was “When is the Autobahn going to be completed?” The answer: “Am n#chsten Anschlu#" [By the next Anschluss]. So Hilti and I rented a piano in Vienna, and we went to this great place that just had pianos all over the place, and the guy got to talking with us. Hilti, of course, her German was fluent, and mine was coming along. I finally got to the point where I could call the Bristol Hotel and I would make reservations for the VIP's

coming to town and I would persist in talking German until he finally abandoned English and talked German with me. That was a milestone in my take-off from the Foreign Service Institute German to a working level. So all this was going on in German, and he said business just had never been the same since the war. In the old days, why he just rented out and sold and so forth lots and lots of pianos, and you know, he said, it's a shame that the right countries didn't get together. Germany, of course, and the Scandinavian countries and England and America. “Das w#re ein Reich,” he said [That would be an empire!] It chilled my spine. Beim n#chsten Anschlu# they'll finish the roads, and if only the right countries had got together, what a Reich that would have been. But all of the friends we made and the folks there, it was all very gem#tlich, very friendly. We went on ski trips. My twins were born in Vienna, in Udolfinahaus.

Q: That's Sophie and —

PRICKETT: Sophie and Suzanne.

Q: Suzanne, yes.

PRICKETT: All of our kids have names that work in both German and English, and all of them, when they started to speak, spoke both languages. Hilti talked German to them all the time, and I spoke English with them all the time, and they would switch just like that. And when Hilti and I would be dressed up to go someplace, I'd come down the stairs, and the kids would say, “Daddy, where are you going tonight? Daddy, where are you going?” — we were dressed up to go out — with a little quiver of the lip and so forth, and then Hilti would come down, “Mami, wo gehst du heute hin?” Just a quick switchover. Sophie is the only one who has really kept up her German, but she's probably better at it than I am.

Q: Did you ever get down to Yugoslavia while you were there?

PRICKETT: Yes. We had one vacation in Yugoslavia just below Rijeka — I can't think of the name of it.

Q: Opatija?

PRICKETT: No, it was —

Q: Crikvenica.

PRICKETT: Crikvenica. It was, in the Hotel Miramare in Crikvenica, and it was a fun vacation.

Q: As you were working on what you were doing, were you figuring out what you wanted to do, because this is an assignment somewhat outside the normal Foreign Service career?

PRICKETT: It was. I wasn't really thinking of career development at that time, and then along came the direct transfer to Basle. But I did a lot of extracurricular stuff. Oh, that was the other thing. The clerk that I mentioned, a member of the mission, resigned, and so I had to do all the filing. I was the file clerk for the mission besides being the administrative officer. The post had been set up by my predecessor, who was a class two admin officer, but it was set up so that it practically ran itself. So on the one hand, I had almost nothing to do, but Betty Gott, who was the second-ranking political officer — third-ranking, I guess — was very conscious of giving a junior officer a chance to do things, so I had my shot at drafting reporting cables from the meetings and things like this. But I had done this until I got bogged down — and I'm not good at filing. I was not happy with that, and I felt stifled. About that time it was reported that engineers graduating were making $11,000. I was making $5,500, and I thought, Good God, I could probably go back to school and take a degree in engineering and come out and do better than I will sticking with this stuff. On the other hand, the extracurricular activities were keeping us interested. Hilti and I sang in a production of Honegger's Joan of Arc at the Stake, where we had to memorize all the chorus work, and we sang at the Universit#tsplatz in downtown Vienna. We skied a lot during the ski season. We went to some of the balls. I think it was the J#gerball every year in Vienna. The most prestigious is the Opernball, the Opera Ball. It's also the most

expensive. The one I could afford was the J#gerball. I've still got the green jacket I bought for that. It's the Hunters' Ball. The second winter we were there, I was president of the international ski club, and we ran 14 weekend ski trips, something I'm still proud of. And let's see, I was active in the English-speaking church and singing in the choir.

Q: Well back to the mission. . . .

PRICKETT: Oh, all right. We'll keep our mission in mind.

Q: In the first place, when did you leave for Basle?

PRICKETT: It was I think June of '61, or maybe it was February.

Q: The admiral who was in charge, Admiral —

PRICKETT: Foster.

Q: — Foster: how was he? I mean, did he know what he was doing, or was this just sort of an assignment?

PRICKETT: Yes. He had been on the staff of Senator, or Representative, I think it was, Clinton Anderson, who was chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. He was a retired admiral. He and his wife were very prominent socially in Washington while they were there. The Admiral ran a tight ship. He was very, very good in the parliamentary debates, in the meetings. When we were talking about safeguards, for instance, he would say, “Mr. Chairman, there's a sign above a saloon in Brooklyn that says 'Too much beer is just enough,' and Mr. Chairman, that's the way we feel about atomic safeguards.” He was in his '70's and one of the sharpest men in town, no question about it. He was a little stiff. One time I applied for leave, and he said, “Well, now how long have you been here,” and I didn't get the leave. So I basically — I never had a real vacation

until I was back home after both Vienna and Switzerland. I had to make do with stretch weekends sometimes.

Q: The Kennedy Administration came in in January of '61. Did that impact on your mission at all?

PRICKETT: I don't believe it did. There were no personnel changes as a result of the change. The Eisenhower Atoms for Peace Initiative, which gave rise to the existence of the IAEA, brought in John McCone as the first governor from the US. He was a defeated congressman from New York State. I think he remained in that office, although he still resided in the States. He came over for the meetings. I do not recall any changes in policy directives. The Kennedy Administration certainly subscribed to the basic mission of the mission, that is to push through those atomic energy safeguards. You know, Eisenhower, by today's lights, would have been considered a “flaming liberal,” a real internationalist. So it didn't make a big difference. We listened on radio to the Kennedy-Nixon debates. I remember one of our mission members saying he wasn't sure how he felt about a President coming into office who was younger than he was. He was a mid-career officer; McClellan was his name.

Q: Walter McClellan?

PRICKETT: No. I can't remember his first name. Ed Brady was the senior scientific advisor.

Q: Well, you were transferred to Switzerland, to Basle, in '61, and you were there for how long, about?

PRICKETT: I was there till June of '62. Let's see, from December of '59 until June of '62, that time was almost evenly divided between Vienna and Basle.

Q: What were you doing in Basle?

PRICKETT: I was the number-two man in a two-man consulate, and my boss was a political appointee who had been appointed as deputy information officer to Paris, I think, partly to handle the flack that came when our U-2 was shot down. He was a very sharp guy, very sharp. He had won a Heywood Broun Prize up in New Hampshire for exposing corruption in the Attorney General's Office — by the attorney general, as a matter of fact. He said it was the only time in his life he ever carried a gun, because he felt threatened by some of that stuff. He was a New Hampshire man. I complemented him on the good looks of the women on the consular staff. They were all women, by the way. And he said, “Prickett,” he said, in his New Hampshire accent, “On my staff I will tolerate inefficiency. I will tolerate bad looks. But I'll be god-damned if I'll tolerate both.” So we had a couple of older women — one was the commercial specialist, and the other was the consular specialist, the passport officer — and then we had a bunch of very nice-looking young women on the staff. And we did not issue immigration visas. We referred them to Bern or Zurich, I believe, but we did a land-office business in tourist visas, but we issued hardly any to non-Swiss. We had a lot of Italian workers who were up in Switzerland as guest workers, Gastarbeiter, and they would come in and they would apply for tourist visas. We would ask them where they lived and why they hadn't applied in their home consular district. Oh, it just wasn't as convenient, and so forth, and we couldn't consider that they were bona fide tourists; they were just looking for a way into the States. Oh, and of course, there was protection, too.

Q: Can you think of any problems?

PRICKETT: There were two substantial categories of students in Basle. There were theology students studying under Karl Barth, and there were medical students, who had, I assumed, not been able to get into a US medical school so they were studying abroad. A number of guys who were my contemporaries were theology students. We played basketball together. They invited me to come to the alternate Monday evening colloquia with Dr. Barth, which was a very, very interesting, stimulating thing. As for

medical students, one of them got picked up by the police for exposing himself to some young girl on one of the bridges across the Rhine at Basle, and so it was my job to visit him in jail and to talk with the police, and we worked out a deal where if he promised to leave the country immediately, they would let him go home, and we accomplished that. The consulate was the entire fourth floor of the Cantonal-Bank in Basle, which was directly next door to the police station and just down the hill from the university. They had one reserved parking place for the consulate. So while Elias McQuaid, my boss, was still there, I parked up the hill by the university, and after he moved, of course, it was a big prestige thing to get my own parking place — and my own consular car. I remember, it happened one time that the boss came back from Bern and there was a new ambassador. I can't remember his name. He was a man who cut quite a swath and was a political appointee. At that same time, the consulate had been given an new car. We had first one of the old Plymouths with the big, long fins, and it rode like a limo. It was big and it had a lot of space. McQuaid had a lot of kids, and it was a handy car for him. The substitute was one of the American Motors cars, which was a short, stubby thing. When McQuaid would go to Bern for the staff meetings — on Wednesday, I think — I would as a practice stop at his house on the way home for drinks and to get briefed on what had been taking place. My first question this one day was, “Well, how do you like your new car — oh, excuse me, what do you think about the new ambassador?” “Prickett,” he said, “let's say I like them equally well.” "Oh," I said, “what is your impression of the ambassador?” “Well, I get the impression that he's a guy who would 'let George do it' — and then blame the hell out of George.”

Q: Were there any problems at that point with Swiss-American relations that you had to deal with?

PRICKETT: Hardly any, hardly any. A member of the Schindler family, that makes elevators and railroad cars, invited me to tour their railroad car factory in Basle, and punctuated the visit with lunch in their private restaurant up the hill from the Rhine River. And having plied me with food and drink, he then brought up the subject of the new

ambassador, who was, I believe, a pharmaceutical entrepreneur from Missouri. He said, “Now, Herr Prickett, this is understand is a political appointment. We seem to be getting your political appointees” — I don't know if he said actually “the residue of your political campaigns” or system, but that was the strong implication. Here I was, a young officer in my 20's, on the spot to answer this one to a major industrialist in Switzerland and in Europe, and whether it was the good lord or somebody else who put the words in my mouth, I've given thanks ever since. I said, “Herr Schindler, there are three things that are true: as long as your country is as beautiful as it is, and as long as our relations are as good as they are, and as long as we have the political system which we have, I'm afraid that you are going to be receiving political appointees as your ambassadors.” I think I did it in reverse order, but I got it. And he, you know, took that in good spirit. I think I stated the case as well as it could have been made.

Q: Absolutely.

PRICKETT: It's what we've lived with all around the world in one way or another.

Q: Was there any sense, was it permeating yet while you were in Basle, on the new Kennedy Administration, that this was considered by many, particularly in the United States, to be a fresh of breath air, a new era, and all that? Had this gotten to your post?

PRICKETT: Yes, yes, especially among the public. The Swiss, you know, in the upper echelons, were generally older and stodgier, and yet they were full of good will and willing to see what happened here. By the way, there was a joke back in Vienna when Kennedy was elected. The story is that their economic minister, I think, a man named Fiegl, loved to take a drink, and when somebody told him who had won the American election, the story was that he was in his cups and didn't quite get it, and he said, “Kenne die?” — in dialect — “Nur beim Heurigen” — only at the time of the new wine season. Kenne die? 'Do I know this one?'

Q: Yes. Well, did you by any chance, in your connection to Vienna and all, pick up any talk about how, when Kennedy made his famous visit to Vienna early on, and his meeting with Khrushchev, which did not go well at all.

PRICKETT: Right.

Q: Were you picking up any stories?

PRICKETT: I was in Switzerland at the time, yes. It was scary, and I think that establishment people were sort of nodding wisely and saying. Now this is sort of what happens when you send a boy to do a man's job.

Q: Yes, I think this was —

PRICKETT: There was that general sense, and the younger idealists who thought this might be the second coming or something were all given pause, ourselves among them. And still, we were such optimists in our country that we didn't really think that disaster was impending. For the Europeans, of course, this had come just after Eisenhower, and we had, you know, the man who won the war in the office. They weren't really worried about us under Eisenhower.

Q: Well, then, Russ, you were assigned where?

PRICKETT: To the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I think somebody had recommended. . . . Yes, the DCM who did my last efficiency report in Vienna had recommended, I think, that I be assigned to the policy planning staff in the State Department. Well, I was assigned to the Policy Coordinating Office of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, sort of a poor man's policy planning staff, except it was much more an administrative coordinating job.

Q: Now you were doing this from when to when? And I thought we'd close at this point. I'm just putting it at the end where we were.

PRICKETT: I was in ACDA from . . . well, for . . . let me think now — I came back in '62, so it was just the one year.

Q: Okay, '62 to '63.

PRICKETT: '62 to '63, and these are basically summer to summer.

Q: All right, well, we'll pick it up the next time. I think Lou Hoffacker will be doing the interviewing at that point. Great. Thank you very much.

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Q: This is Lou Hoffacker on the 16th of April, '99, interviewing Russ Prickett on the continuation of his memoir, which we think broke off during his tour in Basle, so I give you Russ.

PRICKETT: Good morning, Lou. This was about the summer of 1962, and Basle, Switzerland, was my second post. The first one had been in Vienna. When my wife, Hilti, and I came into the Foreign Service, we had no furnishings, nothing at all. We were just a poor young couple still living like students, and I had the good luck to get a bunch of charg# pay for my service in Basle. I was there for about a year and a half, and for a good eight months of that time, my boss, a man named Elias McQuaid, was transferred from Basle to Geneva, Switzerland, and I was left alone in charge of the post. Now I was a newly minted FSO-7 in the old days. I had just gotten promoted, while I was there in Basle. McQuaid was an FSO-2, in those days at the far right-hand side of the pay card. So there was a very considerable gap between our pay scales, and as you know, once you had served your three weeks' time in charge of a post, you got half of the difference between the actual salaries of yourself and the guy that you were replacing. And so I got a bundle

of charg# pay that was about $5,000. Now we're here in 1999, and $5,000 wouldn't cover two months' retirement pension, but in those days, I was able with that money — and I put it all aside; I was able to live on my regular salary and I thought, this is a bonus — so I bought a VW bug, tax-free overseas, for $1,200. I looked very carefully through the furniture catalogues from Denmark and ordered a whole bunch of stuff to be shipped back to the States. I mean, this included a queen-size bed, it included a chest of drawers for the bedroom, it included a nice Danish-style couch and a couple of easy chairs.

Q: Is this Ostermann-Petersen?

PRICKETT: Ostermann-Petersen in Denmark.

Q: What else?

PRICKETT: A nice tea cart, a china cabinet — all this with my charg# pay. So we arrived back from my first jaunt overseas, which included two posts, actually able to set up housekeeping with a modicum of self-respect. So besides having the plum of running my own post before I was age 30.

Q: Was anything going on in Basle in those days?

PRICKETT: Well, mostly it was just doing consular services. I did have some good relations with something called the Swiss Tropical Institute. They relations with Third World countries. There were four major chemical companies located in Basle. CIBA,-Geigy and Hoffmann-Laroche were all separate companies, and I got to know some of the top executives in some of those companies, and a number of their chemists were always coming in. Friday was notarials day, and they came in to notarize their US patent applications. And so that was good fun. I may have mentioned last time that the Swiss theologian Karl Barth was in Basle at that time, and I had the privilege of writing his visa to the United States when he made a trip. Several American theology students were studying there, and we socialized with them and played a lot of basketball together.

Q: What was the seminary? What was the name? Do you remember?

PRICKETT: Well, no, this was the University of Basle, and Barth taught theology at the university, and a number of American young clergymen were taking their Ph.D. in theology from Karl Barth.

Q: Basle was in the Protestant Lutheran part of Switzerland.

PRICKETT: Well, it wasn't Lutheran; it was more Calvinist — Zwingli. We used to say that it was only a matter of numbers that Zwingli's accent in German wasn't the predominant German rather than Luther's. But Swiss German was really quite something to hear. In one of the festivals, their so called Fastnacht — and by the way, they had their Fastnacht (Mardi Gras) one week into the traditional Lent to sort of underscore their difference from the Catholics. They'd have this great wild festival in which it was rumored, or it was said, that men would disappear from their families for a week at a time “because it was Fastnacht.”

Q: Zwingli might have been part of that because, apparently, he had an extracurricular life that was announced, to historians at least.

PRICKETT: And I remember one time we were attending this. . . . one fellow, a flower vendor, would go from restaurant to another, and he'd offer roses, and when nobody took him up he would thank the folks and move on. In the German that we know, that would be “Guten Abend, meine Damen und Herren, sch#ne Rosen. Auf Wiedersehen und einen recht sch#nen Abend.” But in Swiss German, it sounded more like this: “ A guite Obe mi Tenant. Sch#ne R#sli. Noch sie vielmals und eene recht sch#ne Obe.”

Q: It's different.

PRICKETT: Very different.

Q: It's almost Scandinavian.

PRICKETT: Yes, actually, what's his name, Van Buskert, one of our FSI linguists came through. He was of Dutch descent, and he had been up in Holland, and he had written out some words for some of my Swiss local people to pronounce, and what he found was an almost identical correspondence between the sounds of Swiss German, as spoken in Basle, and of Dutch — the same guttural throat sounds and things like this. So there was a lot of fun to be had in Basle, plus I did have my own shop, and I streamlined some of the consular arrangements, the issuance of visas. I think I mentioned that my predecessor had been selected out, and so I had a lot of cleaning up that I was able to do and got a commendation from the department for streamlining the visa operation and stuff like that.

Q: Did the ambassador expect you to do a little political reporting on the side, or did he just allow you to play around with visas.

PRICKETT: He just sort of left me to my own devices.

Q: Maybe there wasn't any political reporting to do. I don't know.

PRICKETT: We did commercial reporting. We had a commercial officer, a woman —

Q: Sure, on the chemical side.

PRICKETT: There were mainly chemicals, and watches and shoes, for internationally significant industries that had one foot in Basle. Bally shoes —

Q: Bally is Basle. So you pronounce it “Bally.” I know a French Swiss lady who calls it “Bye-ee.” I just can't get used to that.

PRICKETT: Well, they didn't call it Bye-ee in Basle.

Q: They didn't.

PRICKETT: That's always the old thing, too: do you pronounce it “Bahzel” or “Bayzel” or B#le — and of course with the a circumflex the French pronounce Basle “Bahl.”

Q: Then you moved back to the States.

PRICKETT: We came back to the States, and I was assigned to the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. The Foreign Service inspectors had been through while I was in Basle.

Q: You came out all right on that?

PRICKETT: I came out fine on that. I came out like a rose. I was running the shop all by myself. I was still in my '20's. I was an FSO-7, and they just said great things.

Q: You were a comer.

PRICKETT: Well, it looked that way. It had taken me a long time to get my first promotion, as I mentioned. It didn't come until I'd been in the Service three years, and I had entered the Service. . . . my entry had been delayed, as I mentioned, by the fact that my wife wasn't an American citizen when I took the first oral exam. And then came the Wriston program and everybody who was in the old six-grade service, got upped a grade when they switched to eight —

Q: They crowded you.

PRICKETT: Yes, they crowded ahead of me. But I made up for some lost time there in Basle, running my own little shop and streamlining the visa operations. Now, of course, they do it by mail, the visas in countries like Switzerland.

But the inspectors had recommended that I be given some kind of great posting stateside, like maybe the Secretariat in the Department. Well, they put me in the secretariat of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, which was about a two-person operation, and

it mostly shuffled paper. Actually there was an officer. . . . there were three, and I was number three.

Q: It was an agency.

PRICKETT: It was, ACDA.

Q: And it wasn't under political-military affairs in the Department.

PRICKETT: No, pol-mil hadn't been formed yet.

Q: Oh, I see.

PRICKETT: Ron Spiers was, I think, deputy head of ACDA before he was named to head up Pol-Mil. I believe he was the first head of Pol-Mil.

Q: Well, you learned a lot from him —

PRICKETT: I sort of did, but mostly I was shuffling paper, and then they moved me over into what corresponded again to policy planning in State, but it was a tiny, tiny shop in ACDA, headed by Henry Byroad, who had the distinction, I believe of having been the youngest general in the history of the army, with an exception, I forget now, of somebody who was only a brigadier anyway, something. But, yes, he was a remarkable guy. His health wasn't good. He had been already completed his tour as ambassador to Afghanistan, and he didn't look well. He was a great guy, soft-spoken and so forth. I worked on his staff and actually did a paper suggesting an arms control initiative for some of the newly emerging countries in Africa. It was my thought that if they could just settle for necessary internal police forces and establish some kind of a regimen that would keep them from threatening each other and having to spend scarce resources on military for show, that this could be a significant development. So I put that paper into the mill, and of course, from this perspective where we are now, we know that it did not come to pass.

Q: Not even as US policy.

PRICKETT: No. But we weren't really taking and active role in Africa. We were happy to leave it to the French, mostly, and people who had traditional ties over there.

Q: This was approximately what year?

PRICKETT: Well, I was in ACDA from . . . actually just one year.

Q: Around '63?

PRICKETT: From '62 to '63, because I had a feeling I wasn't really doing much of significance, and I was looking to get into something that looked more like the real Foreign Service. And there was a bit of good luck because I think the Commerce Department had decided that they were going to eliminate the position of commercial attach# in Belgrade, in Yugoslavia, and they just decided unilaterally they were going to do that. It turned out they couldn't do that without getting the agreement of State, but they hadn't put anybody into the pipeline for the job. So there were some slots open to go into Serbo-Croatian language training, which I did, after a year in Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. I had checked out with a 1+, I think, in Serbo-Croatian when I joined the Service. I had a 1+ in Serbo-Croatian and I think a 1+ or a 2 in German and a 2+ in French — something like that. And so I went into a 10-month Serbo-Croatian language training and came out, I think, with a 3+ or a 4 because I'd had a start at it, having spent time over there in the summer as a student and done some academic work in the language.

So I had a shot at that job, and I had up till then been interested in political work. I was a lawyer, I was a political science major and so on, but when I got out to Belgrade as commercial attach#, I found that I was having some of the most fun in the embassy because I was dealing with the Yugoslav so-called “socialized enterprises.” The Yugoslavs had a unique system of socialism which gave their enterprises a fair amount of

independence, and I was dealing with them as if they were Western companies, and they were just as happy as hell to have somebody dealing with them that way.

Q: This is under Tito, of course.

PRICKETT: Yes, it was.

Q: Okay.

PRICKETT: Shortly after I got to Belgrade, there were already plans underway for a US trade mission to come out there. Within a couple of weeks, the advance man for the trade mission came, and he and I were going all over Yugoslavia drumming up interest in the US trade mission, and then a few weeks after that the mission itself arrived. These were mostly small business people. They weren't about to set the world on fire in commercial terms, but it was a lot of fun.

Q: Was Washington trying to find ways to get used to this quasi-Communist regime? Was this a major thrust of our policy? Did you do this for other Communist countries?

PRICKETT: We were way ahead of anything that had been happening with other Communist countries, but our people in Belgrade had really a good understanding of the Yugoslav system. Our political people saw clearly how independent Tito and his people were from Stalin and the Soviets, and there had been some pretty good economic analysis of the so-called socialist enterprises, and this workers' self-government. A lot of it was just on paper, and the Party still controlled the personnel moves and so on, and yet these enterprises were supposed to be financially responsible. They were supposed to be independent. They were supposed to be making profits (although they didn't call them profits), but the workers shared in this. They had some very arcane accounting practices to avoid the capitalist terminology of profits and the like. All of this was a lot of fun, and what it did also was to open up to the Department of Commerce another country into which to send a trade promotion mission. Again, in those days — we're talking the summer of 1964,

when I actually went over there — the Yugoslavs were importing about $2 billion a year. In those days, that was a substantial market. It was greater than a lot of other countries. And I remember going to a regional commercial officers' conference in Vienna, at which I was able to attract some attention when I said, “Now, the Yugoslav market isn't very big, it's only $2 billion, but that's bigger than. . . . “ and then I recited a bunch of others, and I said, “The French and the British and the Germans and the Italians and and and . . . think it's significant. I think we ought to consider it significant too.” I was an advocate for doing business everywhere.

Q: What was the feeling with the Yugoslavs. You had no problem talking with them, being with them, traveling without restrictions? What were the restrictions?

PRICKETT: None, but there were areas that were blocked off for the military, and this had been the case from very early on, but we were free to drive our cars anywhere in the country, and in we had been free to travel in the country back in '53 when I was there as a student. In '64, we had rented cars for the trade mission, and we. . . . I don't remember whether we went down to Skopje in Macedonia, but I rather think we did. And we were up in Ljubljana in Slovenia. We were over in Sarajevo. Certainly we were in Dubrovnik and in Split and Rijeka.

Q: For the holidays.

PRICKETT: Actually, we did commercial work down there too.

Q: Relations between the two countries were generally good, then, if not friendly.

PRICKETT: Yes. We had an AID program to Yugoslavia, and we were sort of wrapping it up. We had Ex-Im Bank credits available to the Yugoslavs. We were selling airplanes to them, Caterpillar tractors for road-building and railroad building, railroad switching equipment. I had a whole litany of stuff that I knew we were supplying, such as agricultural machinery. Coming from the upper Midwest myself, I looked around at Yugoslav

agriculture, and it looked very much like what we were doing here in the States in Iowa and Minnesota. Minnesota's my home, of course. And so almost from the time of my arrival in Yugoslavia. I said, “We need to do an agricultural trade fair,” that is, an agricultural equipment trade fair, and pushed and pushed and pushed for it. The Yugoslavs had an annual agriculture fair in Novi Sad, the capital of Voivodina, the place where they just bombed a couple of bridges. And just to skip over, we did appear in the Novi Sad fair one time while I was there, but it was strictly a catalogue presentation. We didn't get any hardware over there. Some companies were showing stuff independently of the USG, but Tito came through our little booth and said, “Next year, come back with machines.”

Q: Now the Russians, how did they fit in there? Well, describe it. I just have no feel for how the Russians were behaving vis-#-vis the Yugoslavs in those days.

PRICKETT: Well, their relations had been pretty chilly after '48. Stalin had said, “I will lift my little finger and there will be no more Tito.” Stalin figured he had the Yugoslav Communist Party infiltrated with his agents, but Tito was at home on the ground. He had really led the fight against the Germans and had won the civil war that took place at the same time during World War II, Tito had Stalin's infiltrators infiltrated so in '48, when this confrontation took place, a lot of these sympathizers with Stalin were simply taken to the border of Hungary and Rumania and told to run for it and shot down. Others were taken to some of the island camps and run through a re-indoctrination or brainwashing session. There was a Yugoslav movie made about this theme that was called Otac na poslovim tultu [When Father was Away on Business]. In other words, the father of the family had disappeared and been taken away to one of these islands and run through the “purifying” process. So the remnants of this were still very strong in memory. At the same time, the Russians had an embassy that was electronically well equipped, as we did, and they were there, and the Yugoslavs had never claimed to be anything but Communists. So they were like sort of cousins that hadn't been getting on very well lately. But the Russians and we were both supplying a good bit of military hardware to the Yugoslavs, and the

Yugoslavs — as best our military intelligence people could tell — were really insulating the intelligence information one from the other. The Russians didn't find out a whole lot about our stuff, and we didn't find out a whole lot about theirs, and God knows, we were both trying real hard. One of our attach#s got caught up a tree — literally — trying to use his binoculars and see what was going on on the other side of the barbed wire, as it were, in one of these military establishments — Sezinski was his name, I think, and we called him Ski, and we kidded about “Ski up a tree.” A big burly guy, too. The thought of him up in a tree. . . .

Q: Did he have to leave?

PRICKETT: No, he didn't, actually. He didn't. They must have figured that he hadn't got anything worthwhile, and maybe they'd rather have him hanging around than get somebody in there who was better at it.

Q: Tito obviously ran a very tight shop.

PRICKETT: He did, and in those days, he was still in charge. Later, during the years after my tour, Tito they said, became, if not senile, he was less in charge. I think he was diabetic and he lost a leg. He'd had a leg amputated. He lived a long time. I think he was at least 84 or more when he died in 1980, and some of the folks were saying he lived too long. But as long as he was alive, the Yugoslav Communist system was more flexible. Tito was quite a pragmatist, and if they were able to put economic incentives into their system, as long as Tito blessed it they could still call it socialism. After Tito was gone, they had a lot more rigidity, and if they all had to agree on changes, why then the most conservative of their brain trust effectively had a veto.

Q: How had he handled the ethnicity, which is so important now?

PRICKETT: Tito had been very much a leader of the Communist Party's opposition to the ethnic rivalries. Tito had set up this system of the six Constituent Republics — Slovenia,

Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bosnia, which was then called Bosnia-Herzegovina. They had carved off from Serbia the two autonomous provinces, so- called, of the Vojvodina and Kosovo — as it was then called, Kosovo-Metohija — “Kos-Met” we sometimes called it. The whole idea was that the pre-World War II Yugoslav monarchy had been a very, very heavy-handed thing, and the only people who appreciated it were the Serbs, because the monarch was Serbian. The Croats, the Slovenes and the others really felt oppressed by that monarchy. The Treaty of Versailles had created Yugoslavia as the “Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes,” but it was dominated by the Serbs. The Croats and Slovenes, throughout the 19th century, had had quite a different idea, even though they had all shared in this movement towards Yugoslav unity. These former subjects of the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Empires saw maybe a unified country as their way out of those empires. Both of those empires, of course, imploded surprisingly quickly, from the point of view of people who had been observing them for centuries, with World War I. So maybe before they were ready, but in any case, in a hurry, here was this country ready to be born — people who were ethnically very similar, linguistically very similar, with different religious heritage, the Orthodox Serbs and the Catholic Croats and Slovenes. Well, the Slovenes and the Croats had looked to a kind of a federation or confederation in which they'd have some voice in the central government and a fair degree of autonomy at home. The Serbs looked at a union as being part of a pan-Serbian movement in which they would share the benefits of their monarchy with their Slavic neighbors and cousins. And the latter arrangement was really what emerged after World War I.

So part of Tito's appeal during this civil war that was taking place during World War II was that he was offering something different from the old Serbian monarchy. During World War II, you'll recall that the first resistance movement that we heard about were the Chetniks under Draza Mikhailovic, a colonel who had been elevated to general rank when the monarchy fled from Yugoslavia during the war. Well, Mikhailovic saw his mission as keeping some kind of an army in being ready to rise up when the allies invaded. Tito and his partisans, on the other hand — and this was, again, a broad movement of

which the Communists were the point men — adopted the policy of fighting Germans whenever and wherever they could. And this brought terrible reprisals from the Germans. They'd come into a village where a German soldier had been killed, and they'd trot out ten Yugoslav men and line them up against a wall and shoot them, ten to one. Well, those reprisals drove people out of the villages and into the hills, looking for somebody with whom they could fight Germans. And generally the first folks they found were Tito and his partisans. So this general strategy, or tactic, brought a lot of power to Tito and his people, and in addition, he was already forming his philosophy of a broad umbrella under which the Slovenes could be the best possible Slovenes and the Macedonians the same and including the Serbs and so forth. Plus, the Serbs were about 40 percent of the population, and this provided some balance to their otherwise disproportionate power, and the idea of this carving out of the autonomous province of Vojvodina and the autonomous region (later called province) of Kosovo and giving them some local autonomy and separate voice in this central government also further lightened the weight of the Serbs in this overall balance. So that was one thing they did. And the other, then, that was parallel to it was to be absolutely anathema to regional nationalism. They got their folkways and folksongs and dances and so on, and the idea that Croats hated Serbs and vice versa was utterly a complete no-no. The Communist Party was very, very tough on that. There were some purges of folks who promoted anything that could smack of separatism or whatever. Interestingly, in the first Yugoslav constitution of 1946 and some subsequent versions, the constituent republics — Serbo-Croatia and so forth — had the right on paper to secede from the Yugoslav Federation, and that was one reason that any suggestion that Kosovo might be given the status of a constituent republic was immediately brushed aside because the fear was that Kosovo, which even then had a majority of ethnic Albanian population, would want to secede and join with neighboring Albania. That couldn't be allowed because, after all, the traditional patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church was down in the town of Pe? in Kosovo. De?ani and other monasteries were there, and the famous field where the losing battle had been fought with the Turks back in 1389, Kosovo Polje, the Field of the Blackbirds — that was down there, too. It was kind of a dog-in-the-

manger sense on the part of the Serbs, because any Serbs who could get enough skills and enough education to get out of Kosovo were getting out. It was the poorest place in all Europe, about 100 miles across from east to west and north to south, with the possible exception of Albania itself, probably the poorest area in Europe.

Q: It was largely agricultural and mining, wasn't it?

PRICKETT: Well, rather little mining, too. The Trepca lead mines were there. It was mostly mountainous — I mean very, very dramatically beautiful, but very inhospitable country. A very small percentage of it would be arable land, and very difficult mining. During the Tito years, they did try to start some industries down there, but mostly they were more capital intensive, which meant that it didn't really offer jobs to the poorly educated people down there, the unskilled. So it was subsistence agriculture, really. People were just scratching out their living, and at the same time, the ethnic Albanians had the highest birth rate in all of Europe — nearly three percent per year. It was a situation that was a challenge all the time when I was ever acquainted with the country. And as with other poor countries around the world, what they had for export was people, éiftars, as we called them then, which was the Serbian pronunciation of the Albanian word for their own country and their own nationals, Citai. They called them éiftars. They were working all over Yugoslavia doing the most menial tasks, cleaning the streets, shoveling the snow, doing things like that. We called them éiftars in the '60's. Later, when I came back in the '80's, éiftar was an epithet like the n-word in our country. You couldn't say éiftar any more. They were “ethnic Albanians,” if you please. And I recall back in the '60's hearing one American kid paraphrasing one of our racist sayings in the States, saying, “Who was your éiftar last week?” So it was already considered . . . it was clear, they were on the bottom of the totem pole. They had been oppressed for a long time. We're sort of digressing into current politics a little bit, but it was possible to see some of those things. Tito and the Communist Party were very strong against these nationalists rivalries and old hatreds. These had flared up and were tremendously virulent during World War II, and the most prominent example was probably a lot of atrocities committed by the Croats against Serbs who were

in Croatia. Under the collaborationist coalition government, they collaborated with the Nazis. One of my assistants in the embassy said that he, when he was working as an engineer working on one of the bridges across the Danube, had seen a lot of Serbian bodies coming down the river. Some of them were messages from the Croats, you know, Go back home where you belong. There was really bad stuff. Of course, this had gotten to the point where people remembered what their parents and grandparents had gone through. But now, of course, it's all very immediate and present-generation. So it's much harder. The irony, of course, was that the guys who had come up through the Communist Party, which was dead set against all this nationalist animosity, when the Communist Party was discredited throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, then they had to find some issue to run for office on. It was these very guys who had been in the Party, that were dead set against this nationalism, who had to look around for some kind of issues to run on for office, and they went for the hot button.

Q: Milosevic.

PRICKETT: Milosevic in Serbia, Franjo Tudjman in Croatia — they were both flaming nationalists. There were moderate democratic parties, too little and too late. The Prime Minster Markovic — of course we're talking 1990 now — tried to form a national democratic party, the Reform Party, and economic reform party, and he, of course, just didn't have the political ace to do this. It didn't happen.

Q: Now this was after you were there, these nationalists, Markovic and Milosevic?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: You didn't know Milosevic.

PRICKETT: I did know Milosevic. We have to jump ahead into my tour in the '80's, but he had run a business, a manufacturing business, and then he was the president of the

Belgrade Union Bank when I was head of our economic section in my later tour, which was '82 to '85.

Q: Wasn't his wife following him into politics at that time, or was it later?

PRICKETT: No, at least not that I know of. Maybe some of the guys in our political section. . . .

Q: Because he wasn't in politics; he was in business, essentially.

PRICKETT: Oh, he was, but he was a Party man, you see. As I said, the Party really did the. . . . It was like the old Russian Nomenklatura. The party did the appointments to who headed up what, and Milosevic was a Party man first and then a businessman and then a banker. Then he became president of the Serbian Communist Party and then later president of Serbia itself. He was head of the bank and, I don't know, maybe I can jump ahead and tell my Milosevic story now, although we haven't gotten up —

Q: Do you want to save it until we come back the next time?

PRICKETT: Yes, we can save it, I think.

Q: Because you were there from '64 to —

PRICKETT: '64 to '68.

Q: Oh, you had a good tour. So you got enough for your book.

PRICKETT: I did.

Q: And you've picked out your —

PRICKETT: Yes. One of the chapters had to do with the commercial relations, and another chapter had to do with the financial bailout when they had a hard-currency shortage in the '80's. I wrote that chapter first because it was freshest in the mind.

Q: Well, lets put in a —

PRICKETT: A little footnote that some of this will be coming later?

Q: No, that the book is . . . that the book is something that people ought to read if they want to know more about this.

PRICKETT: Well, it certainly provides a lot of background. It's Yugoslav-American Economic Relations Since World War II, and it came out in January of 1991. My co-authors were John Lampe, professor at the University of Maryland and East-European Secretary of the Woodrow Wilson Center, and Ljubisa Adamovic, who is professor of economics specializing in international economics at the University of Belgrade. I'll get back to the book, I think, when we get over to my second tour.

Q: All right, fair enough, good.

PRICKETT: I wanted to mention some of the other folks at the embassy when I arrived in 1964. When I was in Serbo-Croatian language training, '63-64, I fully expected that I'd be serving under George Kennan, whom President Kennedy had appointed, brought him back out of retirement from Princeton, and Kennan had agreed to serve under Kennedy as ambassador to Yugoslavia. This goes back to your other question. We were awful about American policy toward Yugoslavia because Kennan had resigned in protest against some of the Congressional treatment of the Yugoslavs. Maybe it had some effect, but he found American policy, as dictated by Congress, as insufficiently forthcoming to the Yugoslavs, insufficiently encouraging of their independence and their middle ground, their middle road between the Soviet Union and their position astride the Iron Curtain, if you will. He had resigned, so I missed serving under Ambassador Kennan. Eric Coacher was DCM under

Kennan and was charg# when I arrived, and he was charg# for several months. I don't know how much charg# pay he got. And then Burke Elbrick was our ambassador there. Elbrick, I think at that time and certainly before he left the post, had the rank of career ambassador, which is our highest rank, and I think had held it longer than anybody else. So he was by one measure the highest-ranking Foreign Service officer in the Service. He had served in Lisbon prior to that and served in Brazil after that. He was studying Serbo-Croatian. He wasn't proficient in the language. He was fluent in Portuguese. And you'll recall that later he was kidnapped and held hostage in Brazil. He and his wife were delightful people. He ran a good shop. Yes.

Q: He was very healthy, wasn't he?

PRICKETT: Yes, healthy.

Q: And his wife was statuesque and colorful.

PRICKETT: Colorful person, and I think in the traditional role of diplomat's wife, ambassador's wife, and so on, her intelligence and energies were underemployed, and so we thought of her sometimes as being a little bit on the silly side. But she was a sweet lady, and as I say, I think it was partly because she didn't have enough challenge for her energies and intelligence.

Q: Now that brings to mind Mrs. Tito. Didn't they talk to each other? Didn't Tito see the ambassadors in a social sort of way?

PRICKETT: Not socially so much, but he would see the ambassadors from time to time.

Q: On business calls. Didn't he get a lot of calls. That wasn't very Communist.

PRICKETT: No, no. He projected himself pretty much as a man of the people, and at the same time he had wonderful dress uniforms that he could appear in and be photographed in and so on. He had a great presence. He was not a tall man, and you saw pictures of him

welcoming various heads of state or government to Belgrade, and they all seemed to be paying respect to Tito. Well, if you analyzed those pictures, it was because Tito was short, and he was standing upright, and he would lean toward the visitor, he would simply extend his hand; and in order to shake hands with him, they sort of had to bend over. And so you had these pictures of people seeming to pay respect, in their body language, to Tito, who by that time — as you indicated with your gesture a moment ago — had acquired a bit of "frontage" and was portly. And he would stand there with his belly out and his hand out, and they would sort of lean forward to shake his hand.

Q: In pictures of Milosevic, he's always standing like that. Isn't he a short man?

PRICKETT: I don't remember. Mikhailovic, you mean, not Milosevic.

Q: I'm sorry, Milosevic.

PRICKETT: Milosevic is short too.

Q: Short.

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: He's always standing like Tito —

PRICKETT: I think he patterns his body language after the Marshall, yes. Yes, I think so.

Q: Okay. I'm sorry, I'm getting away from your substance.

PRICKETT: But it is a trait, I think. These are people with immense pride, and you didn't see a whole lot of Yugoslavs slouching or slumping, ever. Mostly they're tall folks, and so if somebody is short and achieves a position of leadership in the country, he's got to stand tall, and he's got to have something about his physical presence. You may recall the Yugoslavs had done very well in international basketball. They're a bunch of tall people.

Walk down the street, and you see young kids in the distance, and by the time you're meeting them, you know, they're towering over you. High school kids 6' 1", 6' 2", very, very common.

Q: Did you think that Elbrick had good relations with Tito, as good as possible?

PRICKETT: Yes. Elbrick himself had a lot of personal dignity and was, I think, one of the. . . . He was of our old school —

Q: Classic?

PRICKETT: Classic and classy. He chose his words very well.

Q: He knew his business.

PRICKETT: He knew his business extremely well. He had immense respect for the diplomatic process, and he was —

Q: — a pro.

PRICKETT: He was a pro, and he was. . . after all, they were picking a man to succeed George Kennan. They had to come up with somebody who had some class. I was thrilled.

Q: Well, of course, if not dazzled.

PRICKETT: I was told to be out there with a feeling that maybe, Hey, I'm on the first team. It was great. The second secretary I mentioned that we had had in an AID program and one of the things that was a responsibility of the Economic Section was to handle residual AID matters. Well, who was the guy who did that? It was a second secretary named Larry Eagleburger. The famous or notorious earthquake in Skopje in Macedonia had happened in 1963, just the fall, I think it was, before I arrived. Stu Kennedy went down to Skopje and set up, basically, a consular office. He and Larry Eagleburger went down.

Larry was coordinating US aid efforts, and they lived in tents. They were going down there to take care of our people and our aid missions. There were a lot of social security recipients, former immigrants to the United States who had come back. Maybe a lot of them were citizens, some were not, who had gone back home to retire. So we had very strong consular interests down there when this devastating earthquake struck. So Stu and Larry went down to Macedonia at the same time practically that the French consulate was pulling out. Well, of course, their building was devastated, and they didn't have any place to stay. But our guys were going down there and living in a tent, while others were pulling out.

In very short order, we had brought a US army hospital down into Skopje. Who do you suppose coordinated that move? Larry was the point man, and he got the clearances through the air space. He worked all night, practically, to get those things, so that by the time dawn came and the Skopje airport opened, our army planes had been in the air and were ready to land. I mean, that was just a hell of an operation.

Now an army hospital travels with its own rations and so forth for the personnel, but not for the patients. We expect our army hospitals are to provide for army people, and the army has it's own logistics to feed its people and so forth, so in sending an army hospital unit to take care of somebody else, where was the food going to come from? A sergeant-major in the attach#'s office in embassy Belgrade made a regular run. He would take a truck and go to the open-air markets in Belgrade and load up with food and get on that highway and go down there.

Q: Drove to Skopje.

PRICKETT: And drove to Skopje.

Q: That's a good long way.

PRICKETT: Yes, but there was a good highway. It was, I suppose, two or three hundred miles.

Q: That took him all day.

PRICKETT: Well, the better part of a day, but he was in the markets when they opened at five o'clock in the morning, and he was loading up that truck. And by god, we fed the patients in that hospital. It was a tremendous operation, and of course, it made us great friends among the Yugoslavs, and the Macedonians, who had been very, very inward-turned — you know, they're landlocked and down there in that mountainous country — and they were very . . . not friendly to foreigners —

Q: Resentful?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: They felt people want to covet them. They felt their neighbors wanted to take part of their land.

PRICKETT: Oh, sure. The Macedonian Question was not a happy one for the Macedonians. But this really opened them up to the outside world, and particularly to us, in a friendly and a happy way. And then we put up a lot of temporary Quonset huts and so on. They called it “Eagleburger Village.” But you know, we provided housing for people who didn't have any housing. I mentioned early on that my summer work when I was going to school was in our ice factory. When I looked at some of the apartment buildings that I saw in '64 that had suffered the earthquake, what I saw were cracks that extended along the sides of those buildings that reminded me of a big 400-pound chunk of ice that you'd better not grab with your tongs or it would just break all to bits and crush your feet. Some of those apartment buildings looked as if they were ready to tumble. The reconstruction took a long time, and we were very helpful in it. We later had an earthquake in Alaska, a minor one and so forth, and the Yugoslavs sent some prefabricated housing as a gesture

of sympathy and thanks. So we were doing good stuff in our relations with the Yugoslavs, and they were responding in kind.

Larry and I spent a lot of hours on the road. I went with him on a number of trips down there to see how things were going, and he showed me around, showed me the Quonset huts and so forth. There was still stuff to be tied up from that effort. But he was the key to the city of Skopje. He was very well known —

Q: It's appropriate that he went back as ambassador.

PRICKETT: It was, it was. And he knew the language very well. He was very good with languages. And there's a language story. He was escorting Effie Elbrick through an art museum in Skopje, and she was learning Serbian a bit — Macedonian, by the way, is not far from Serbian at all; it's somewhere between Serbian and Bulgarian, and if you speak Serbian, you can converse with a Bulgarian a lot of people tell me. She was trying to compliment the appearance of one of these modern works of art, and the word for 'beautiful' is leho or leha, and so she said, “Kakose lehe kurve,” meaning to describe — and she was thinking in partly Portuguese — the wonderful curved lines. Well, unfortunately, kurva means 'whore' in Serbian. So here's Larry coming along behind her, and she's talking to the curator of the museum, and she says that: What lovely prostitutes they had on their wall.

Larry had a great sense of humor. He'd pick up the phone, if he was following up on something, and he'd say, “Hello, Birdledogger here.”

Q: So he was about second, first secretary?

PRICKETT: He was number three in the economic section. We were second secretaries together.

Q: Both together. Oh, my goodness. Well, well.

PRICKETT: Another sign of my misspent youth, I guess.

Q: Well, so you had a good four years there.

PRICKETT: I had a good four years.

Q: You then went home.

PRICKETT: I was proud to say that I had established the first complete American commercial program in any Communist country anywhere, with a commercial newsletter, with trade missions, with world trade directory reports, the so-called WTDR's that we did on foreign businesses —

Q: Good for you.

PRICKETT: — with commercial exhibits, and the whole shmier. We had to make some decisions how we were going to do our commercial newsletter, because this is a country with two alphabets and a number of ways of writing their language, and we determined that we would use the Serbian standard of syllabification. The Serbs say “koalo leho” for 'thank you very much'; the Croats say “koalo lieho”. They call it ie-kauski or I-kauski when they describe the different dialects or styles of the language, and e-kauski was the Serbian thing. So we decided we were going to do e-kauski, but we would write it in the Latin alphabet, and in those days the national economic daily was written in the Latin alphabet, and one of the things that the Serbs were first to do when the country broke up was to stop printing anything in the Latin alphabet. It's all Cyrillic out there now. This was a unifying thing. We got permission to publish in their language, which was a big, big step.

Q: Good for you. Good for you.

PRICKETT: The public affairs officer was reluctant to go in and ask, and he was a very high-ranking guy in USIA. I got the ambassador's approval to do the thing, and I finally

said to the PAO, “Will you do this, or shall I?” — this is Walter Roberts, by the way, a big gun in USIA and very knowledgeable about Yugoslavia and a fine person, but he was afraid, he didn't want to ask and get turned down and set a precedent that wouldn't work later, and he thought it was a bit early to try for something like that — he was publishing in Serbo-Croatian his American magazine, but this was all definitely to an approved list of subscribers, and it was our cultural stuff. The idea of business stuff to —

Q: — anybody —

PRICKETT: — to anybody, and particularly to the business community — that was new. And then he went in. He was surprised when he got the “Yes.” And we had permission to mail to a certain number of people. I forget how many thousand it was. I got some good advice from people who said don't fill up your mailing list right away, don't send to more than half, be very selective, because you will acquire new names that you will want to send to, and if you have used up your quota, then you won't be able maybe to get it out to your best prospects. So I was, I suppose, maybe the youngest commercial attach# in the service back in those days. I was 32 years old when I went out as commercial attach# to Belgrade, and I was doing pioneering work. I had been trained, as I said before, in political science and law and I was looking to be a political officer in the Foreign Service, but I was having the most fun of anybody in the embassy, with the possible exception of the ambassador.

Q: Did you have a good local staff?

PRICKETT: I had an old fellow named Dan Dobredolac, who was my commercial assistant. He was the engineer that I mentioned that had seen the Serbian bodies coming down the river. And then the second assistant was named Nada Vuji#. She was the wife of a Serbian engineer. They lived over in Pan?evo across the river, and they were both very, very devoted. They had both lived through the toughest time of the Communists. A lot of anti-American stuff had gone down, and the local staff were either fiercely anti-Communist

or they were on the pay of the Yugoslav secret police. So we had to assume that even if our help was very sympathetic to us, that there was no way that they couldn't be coopted to tell what they knew, and so, of course, our embassy was very much segregated as to who could go where without an escort. My commercial library was down on the first floor right next to the entrance to the embassy, and my office was up on the fourth floor. So I got a lot of exercise going up and down the stairs. The elevator was small and old, so I kept in pretty good shape during that. With the exception that all of this traveling around meant that you ate an awful lot of what you would call barbecue down there in Texas. The Yugoslav food was heavy, but good, substantial stuff. You had a lot of high-cholesterol, a lot of meat and potatoes. The meat was very good. It was beef and pork and lamb and on a spit, roasted outdoors.

Q: And Slivovitz and other things to drink, and beer and whatever.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. Beer, and Yugoslavs make good wines, their white wines especially, but they have good reds and whites. People always said their wine was better than their beer. I developed a taste for the beer first and later came around to the wine. After leaving the country, even, in the '80's, you could buy Yugoslav wines in the supermarkets back here in the States. That's jumping way ahead, too, but Coca-Cola developed a barter program, and they were selling their Coca-Cola over in Yugoslavia and taking Yugoslav wines in exchange.

Q: Not making Coca-Cola there, just selling —

PRICKETT: No, they did have bottling plants, but the syrup, of course, came from here. Well, let's see. Back to the '60's.

Q: Back to the embassy.

PRICKETT: We did, as I said, have a very strong commercial program where we had a trade show that came through in 1966. Tru-Ex '66 it was called, and this show, sponsored

by the Department of Commerce, had been, I believe, in Madrid and Munich and Belgrade. It was a three-point thing. And so Belgrade was in some pretty big company. This was equipment for the tourist industry, and it included all kinds of hotel equipment, which could also be used for hospitals and other public facilities — kitchen cooking equipment, of example, and then recreation equipment of all kinds. The inventor of the trampoline was over there, and he selling his stuff. People who provided these parquet dance floors that can be fit together, you know, squares of them on top of a carpet — this outfit was there. We had a lot of space in the Belgrade fair facilities, and their trade fair facilities were quite good, spacious. In fact, our trade fair was in Yugoslavia, in Belgrade, at the same time that the Russians had a touring show of their space program, and they had a space capsule, and one of their cosmonauts came to town. I talked to the director of the Belgrade fair grounds, with whom I had a good, friendly relationship, and his deputy director especially, who was very much an anglophile and an America-phile, who had translated Helen Keller's book into Serbian, by the way. Anyway, I talked to them, and I said, “Maybe we could set up reciprocal visits,” that we, our guys from Commerce and some of our business people could go and get a walk-through of the Russian space exhibit, and their people could come and walk through our commercial exhibit. So we did that, and while we were doing this, without thinking about it very much, I got to talking with the Soviet cosmonaut, a man named Popov, a well-put-together fellow of about 5' 9” or so, not a tall guy. And midway talking to him, I suddenly realized, I'm talking to this guy, and I don't know Russian and he doesn't know English. I was talking Serbian. I raised this with him, and “Oh,” he said, “I'm Ukrainian, and Ukrainian and Serbian are close enough together so that you can understand each other if you're speaking one language and the other.” So that was a kick. That was great fun.

Q: Heavy competition, though, space show.

PRICKETT: Well, you know, they were talking to the general public, and it was fine, and we had —

Q: There was no static or anything about it. Belgrade was lucky to have both.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. And it was kind of typical of what was going on. We had cultural presentations. The Roger Wagner Chorale came to Belgrade in the '60's. Sviatoslav Richter, the Soviet pianist, came. We were in cultural competition. And of course we got to go to them all. We had a great time in this kind of thing.

Q: Belgrade was a major capital.

PRICKETT: Rubinstein, the pianist, came. Arthur Rubinstein came. They applauded and applauded and applauded, and he played encore after encore after encore, and finally he came out with his hands steepled together in a “please, please” gesture and opened his hands and looked at them and shook his head and said, basically, he had done all he could do.

Q: That was pretty far along in his career, wasn't it.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes.

Q: He was never young in my lifetime.

PRICKETT: No, no, no. He was quoted famously as having said, “Oh, there are young people now who can do things that I could never do. They can do absolutely superhuman things; I wonder when they're going to start making music.” Isaac Stern came to town. He actually was politically very astute, very much up on world affairs, and he had a question and answer session with the students at Belgrade University who were asking about the war in Vietnam, and he was handling himself very well. I had some of that experience myself on a field trip when we were in Sarajevo. What was his name? Gross, Stu Kennedy's deputy — Howard Gross — and I made a field trip down to Sarajevo, and we had talked at length with young people from the University of Sarajevo as to how the university was structured. Yugoslavs, at least on paper, were way ahead of us in terms

of the students having considerable say in the running of the university. I'm sure that the students that had the say were very carefully picked and supervised by the party, but that was all backstage. And so we said, “Now you've been very generous with your responses to our questions. Do you have anything you want to ask us?” And bingo, we were right into Vietnam and what the hell were we doing over there, and so on. I said — and we were talking in their language — and I said, “Well, now, however you look at it, there was at least a certain pressure from the north to the south that — “ “Well, what business do you have over there anyway, way over in the Pacific?” I said, “We were invaded from the Pacific. We were attacked from the Pacific.” “Oh.” They could understand that. So we had —

Q: It was a good presentation.

PRICKETT: It was fun to deal with Yugoslavs, very direct, very open — blunt, of course, to the point of rudeness oftentimes, but you knew where you stood with them.

Q: How was Sarajevo as a city in those days, sophisticated and cosmopolitan?

PRICKETT: No, not so much. It was very much inward-turned. It was —

Q: Ethnically what was the composition, or did it matter?

PRICKETT: It hardly matters, almost equal parts of Bosnian Muslims, Serbs so-called (that is, people of the Eastern Orthodox heritage), and Catholic-heritage Croats. You're talking about Bosnian Serbs, you're talking about people who come from the Eastern Christian heritage. Bosnian Croats are of the Roman Catholic tradition. And the Muslims. First time I was ever in Sarajevo was in 1953 as a student. I was in the Hotel Europa — Evropa, as they call it — and I could count from my hotel window 15 minarets — lots of Muslim mosques in Sarajevo.

Q: I never regarded them as intensely Muslim —

PRICKETT: Very secular, but the mosques were there. Their little coffee cups had the crescent in the bottom, in good design, or their tea services and so on.

Q: Nobody was veiled, or were they, in the '60's?

PRICKETT: No, but they did have a kind of a headscarf their faces were not veiled, but often the hair would be covered.

Q: Not the university students.

PRICKETT: No, the kids were very much of the 20th century.

Q: Blue jeans.

PRICKETT: Yes. Later on. But blue jeans came in in the '60's. In fact, they were among my clients as commercial attach#. Actually, Levi's, I believe, worked out a licensing arrangement and did some manufacturing.

Q: Oh, manufacturing.

PRICKETT: Yes. There were American textile interests that did licensing there. I still have some suits that I bought down south of Skopje at a textile plant. They were making to American specifications. This, again, was in the '80's. This stuff was starting in the '60's, and I was proud and happy to have had a role in it.

The John Deere tractor company was working on a deal to sell some of their universal harvesters — these are harvesters that could do corn and small grains — and it was sort of a million-dollar deal, and I learned about it one day when a man appeared in my office — I should remember his name; it may come to me; he was German. At any rate, he had a problem. He said, “They have promised to give me a bank guarantee of payment for the John Deere equipment, and we signed an umbrella agreement last year. The people back in Illinois have run the machines off, and the guarantee that's been promised, week

after week, month after month, has simply not come through. I've been given my marching orders from headquarters that if I don't get that guarantee by tomorrow, the company is going to have to cancel the deal, because they must offer the machines on the domestic market. They cannot afford to just store them and have them around. And to offer them on the domestic market, they have to be modified somewhat from how they've been made, and then the whole marketing effort and distribution method has to go. So we're counting back from harvest time in the States, and they've given me this as a final deadline, and I don't know what to do about it. They won't talk to me."

Well, I got on the phone to a guy named Kapatanovic, who was the director for the [word indistinct] at the Yugoslav agricultural bank, and I talked to him, and he said, "Well, yes, we can have it in a few days, but we can't do it today." It'll be just a few days, and so forth. And I said, "Mr. Kapatanovic, I don't want to be in the middle of this process. I'd like you please to tell Dr. [whoever] in person. Can we come over there?" "Well, no, I can't. . . ." "Well, look, I just want you to tell him this in person because I think this is too important business to just do it by telephone." The connection was broken. And I called back, and I asked to talk to Mr. Kapatanovic, and the operator said, "He is in the office with his general director," that he was in this meeting and can't be disturbed. So I said to our embassy operator, I said, "Call this number. Talk to the operator there, and tell them that the John Deere representative and I are on our way over to the Agricultural Bank. And he did it. When we got there, they were waiting for us, and we went in and they sat and negotiated and talked. It was the better part of the day, and finally — the Yugoslav business day was from seven to two, Monday through Saturday. We were there until, it must have been, close to four o'clock, and they still couldn't reach agreement, still couldn't reach agreement and so on. Hess, that was it. Dr. Hess. And he was absolutely crestfallen when we walked out of the agricultural bank, and I said, "Dr. Hess" — no, it was noon, it was noon when we walked out — and I said, "the business day doesn't end until two" — that was it — "and you've still got time, of course, with the time difference back to Illinois. They may still get back to you." He had left them his number at the hotel and so forth. Well, the next day, it

turns out that they had gotten back to him, and they said they would give him a personal letter relating to the guarantee. They would assure him personally, and if he would give his personal assurance back to Moline, Illinois, and that would work. Well, I was familiar with the Serbian mentality at that time and knew something about the businesses, and I figured out — and later on I asked and was confirmed on what had actually been going on. The Agricultural Bank had been going around to the various Yugoslav kombinats, they called them, great big state or socialized farms, to try to get them to promise that they would export, that they'd increase their exports in order to earn the hard currency necessary to pay for these harvest machines. When these kombinat directors heard, as they did find out, that about half of the resources were available but only half — this had come out of our negotiations — and they needed to scare up the other half with additional guarantees of exports, why, being good Yugoslavs, they all just naturally assumed, well, my machines are included in the good half, and so they don't need anything more from me. So they had their guys out there trying to strong-arm or trying to get the Yugoslav agriculture enterprises to commit, and they were finally able to do it. But it was such a delay, that these machines, which were normally — they're self-powered machines — they were normally — yes, huge, huge things — they were normally knocked down, you know — the wheels were taken off, they were packed and crated, and so forth — they had to be shipped wholly mounted, wheels on and everything. But the time came when the ship arrived, and these machines under their own power rolled down the gangplank in the Port of Skopje, and John Deere made their sale. This was shortly before I left Belgrade in 1968.

Q: Is Skopje a port?

PRICKETT: I'm sorry, did I say Skopje? I meant Rijeka, sorry, Rijeka, which is up in the north, that's up by the Istrian Peninsula and is the biggest port in the former Yugoslavia, Rijeka. The Italian name for it is Fiume, and in the Port of Rijeka —

Q: Is that now Slovenia?

PRICKETT: It's now Croatia. Koper is the Slovenian port, which is on the north side of the Istrian Peninsula. Rijeka is kind of in the armpit of the Istrian Peninsula on the Dalmatian Coast. Shortly, just within a matter of weeks before I was leaving Yugoslavia at the end of my tour, it seems that John Deere had signed a deal where they were actually going to do some local manufacturing. They were going to license manufacturers some of their equipment. The chairman, I believe, or maybe it was the vice-president for export — I had known the vice-president for export; his name was John Grafman — the chairman, I think, or the president, came over and, as was traditional in business circles in Yugoslavia, they gave reciprocal lunch and dinner, ceremonial things. The equivalent of the secretary for agriculture — actually he was an undersecretary of commerce for the agricultural division of commerce (his name was Debrecin), a great big guy, Croat (we used to say, “#elovek globalnih proporcije,” 'a man of global proportions'), was the ranking Yugoslav on their side. Well, when I met the John Deere chairman, when I was introduced to him, he said, “Oh, you're Mr. Prickett.” He knew about that adventure we'd had that had given them their first foothold in the country.

Q: Well, that must have made you feel good.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. And then, in I think it was the, well, one of the meals they were giving back, the John Deere chairman had given a toast to their future successful and happy relations with Yugoslavia and so on, and Anton Debrecin, the ranking Yugoslav agriculture official, had responded in kind. Then at the end of his remarks he said, “But this is not an entirely happy occasion.” I was seated at his left. He said, “Mr. Prickett, who has been so helpful to these relations, will soon be leaving our country, and we're very sorry to see him go.” Well —

Q: So that was near the end of your tour.

PRICKETT: It was just days away, days away from my departure.

Q: Well, that's a good send-off.

PRICKETT: A couple of weeks or ten days.

Q: Good for you.

PRICKETT: Talk about ego strokes.

Q: Well, obviously you had a little more slivovitz. So where did you go in '68?

PRICKETT: The end of my tour in Belgrade, as far as business was concerned, was that happy occasion with the people from John Deere. But I might just go back and mention some of the extracurricular stuff that we did.

Not long after I arrived — I think it turned out to be about February of 1965 — our British friends put out the word that they were going to write and produce a piece of musical theater, and they did. They invited people to take part, and it was called Mountain Air, and it was a story of a bunch of folks from England who were on skiing vacation in Austria and found themselves in a village where there were a couple of inns that were in intense rivalry. Sure enough, one of the inns was run by a widow who had a beautiful daughter, and the other was run by a widower who had an eligible son, and the parents were rivals and had some animosity between them which turned out to date from an old, old former romance — all of this, you know, clich#s of comedy, parlor comedy and so forth. Then the head of the travel agency, let's see, was very much adored by his assistant, and they were both on the trip along with a bunch of students from England, and they arrived — now this was easy to produce because we all had ski clothing, we all had our German or our Austrian type jackets and things, and we were able to provide out of our own or borrowed wardrobe all the costuming that we needed to do. I had mentioned earlier the Skopje earthquake. The thing was set up to be a benefit performance with the proceeds to go for some medical equipment for the hospital down in Skopje. Actually, it was set up at first to do any worthy cause related to Skopje, and that's how it focused. Belgrade

television donated the scenery for our show — they constructed it — and the Children's Theater of Belgrade provided the space. And we had a show that went, I think, for eight or nine days, and we netted some, I think, $800 or $1000, which went to some piece of medical equipment down in Skopje. And it was attended, not just by the foreign community but by Yugoslavs as well. We had a ball. I was the son of the widower and was the local ski instructor and sang a yodeling song in the thing and had a great time, and we had 13 or 14 nationalities represented, including Yugoslavs, in that play. I had been among, other things, a church choir director when I was in college. It was one of my part time jobs. And we had an active English-language Protestant Church community in Belgrade which didn't have much by way of a choir, and I thought, you know, there were a lot of people who were singing very nicely in this show. I wondered how we could get them together. Well, one thing you don't do in the diplomatic service is turn down an invitation to a cocktail party, so Hilti and I gave this cocktail party in which we invited the 40 or 50 people who had been in this show to come and have a kind of reprise of Mountain Air. Of that I think we got a good dozen folks who were willing to get together and sing on weekly basis in these protestant services, and you know, we had our party and then we passed out some music and we had a kind of musical sing-along or song-fest. Then I made the pitch, and several of the folks were happy to get together and do this.

Q: What size congregation did you have?

PRICKETT: We had probably 30 or 50 people at most. The Brits, Canadians, Australians.

Q: Did you have a pastor?

PRICKETT: We didn't until later in the game. Eventually we did. Let's see, we had a US army chaplain who would come through periodically, and there was also a British Church of England priest who had a kind of a circuit in Eastern Europe, I guess. He came through. Eventually we did get a pastor who lived in Belgrade. He had been pastor of the community church in Vienna. We had known him up there. His name was Ken Zebell, and

his denomination — I think it was, oh, Congregationalists, I think — at any rate, they were interested because. . . . This was the '60's, mind you, days of a lot of talk about church unity and the Pope had extended some olive branches to the Protestants. There was a “Church Unity Sunday,” in which our little Protestant group got together with others, and we met, I think, in a Catholic church in Belgrade. And while we were the Protestants, my little choir sang, and we did an Orthodox piece by Bortnianski and we did Mozart, the Catholic Ave verum corpus, as Protestants singing in this. . . . At any rate, this sort of thing was going on.

Oh, I was going to say, in this Christian unity movement, Ken Zebell's denomination decided that if the next step was going to be some kind of union with the Orthodox churches, they needed to know more about the Orthodox Church. So they had established a partial stipend for some member of their faith to go to some location in the Orthodox tradition, and Ken Zebell, who was already in Vienna, had put in for it and had won it and was coming to Belgrade. He could come if we could provide housing, and we found housing, and of course we had taken an offering, but we hardly had anything to spend it on except Sunday school materials for the kids, and we didn't know whether we would be able to support something like this. I was on the church board, and here's another name for you: Spike Dubs was head of our Political Section. Spike and I had tours that almost exactly coincided. We had a little field organ from the Army Chaplain Corps. He played. Spike was a pianist.

Q: What did you use for a church?

PRICKETT: We used the American Club room where the movies were shown. Spike, I think, was chairman of the church board, and I made the argument, and Spike agreed with it and people went along with it, that we hadn't had any use for our offerings, but if people had something that really needed to be paid for, people would dig a little deeper into their pockets, and we would manage it somehow. And we did. We did. So Ken came down there, and so we actually had our own resident pastor for a time. And he did a lot of

traveling, of course, to black monasteries and was down in Greece and so on. So we were putting stuff together.

You mentioned, maybe reflecting at the end of these reminiscences, but I think it's worth mentioning right here. What I found one of the most rewarding things about the Foreign Service was that you came right face to face with your need for certain social institutions. If we were overseas, if we didn't serve on the school board or the church board, if we didn't create community events, they didn't happen. We had to all of us take part, because we were spread that thin, and if we wanted a church group, then we had to form a church group. If we wanted American schooling for our kids, we had to create it in some way. And so Spike and I both served on the board of the church and on the board of the American school in Belgrade. I guess the second half of my tour I was chairman of the church board, and Spike was chairman of the school board, and we needed a new constitution for the school board, and so on. Of course, our kids went to that school. It went up through the sixth — I think we kept extending it — it got as far as the eighth grade before the kids had to go away to school.

Q: This was under the auspices of the Department's International School Program?

PRICKETT: Yes. And of course, it took a lot of Spike's work, as head of the Political Section, to get approval for this kind of thing to go on, especially in a Communist country.

Q: And you called it the American School, or international school?

PRICKETT: Let me see — ISB: International School of Belgrade. I was confusing with later on when I was in Tokyo, there was the American School of Japan (ASJ), but this was ISB, International School of Belgrade. We had Americans and Brits, basically, I think, and maybe Canadians.

Q: Then you got on the ship and went home.

PRICKETT: Got on the ship and went home, on the same ship with Spike Dubs, as a matter of fact, and I believe we played in the ping pong tournament on the ship and we were the finalists. And in fact, we had done this — we had been on the ship twice together. I think he won one tournament and I won another.

Q: Those were the days when we used to take the ships.

PRICKETT: When we could take the ships.

Q: Then they finally phased them out, and then we had to fly.

PRICKETT: I remember debating whether to take the ship or not. It was Stu Kennedy who said, “Russ, can you really afford not to take a week's vacation in first-class accommodations by the sea?”

Well, we got back to Washington, and I had decided, I guess it was during home leave in 1966, the middle of my tour in Belgrade, that I was going to bridge over. I was not going to follow my original inclinations to be a political officer; I was going to switch and go to economic. Now I had had very little economic work in college. I think I'd had the basic economics course and a course in public finance. If there was anything else, I don't remember it. So what I needed to do was apply to the Foreign Service Economics Course. I had been accepted to that course by the time I went back, and so I had to get back by the middle of 1968 in order to get into that six-month course. My wife and kids went down to Huntsville, Alabama, where her parents lived. I think I mentioned that my-ex-father-in-law was of the Von Braun rocket scientist team, and Von Braun had persuaded Rudolf to found the Space Flight Institute at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. And so they went and spent the summer down there, and I had to stay with somebody. We didn't have a place to live yet, and I had to find us a place to live. And so I stayed for several weeks with Stu Kennedy, north of DC, up in Bethesda.

Q: And then they came back for the school year.

PRICKETT: His family, I think, was up in New England, and so we were bachelors together for several weeks in the summer of 1968.

Q: Until you found a place for the family.

PRICKETT: That's right.

Q: They came back for the school year?

PRICKETT: That's right, yes. And we were in Green Acres, which was just north of the DC Line up Wisconsin Avenue.

Q: You were nine months at FSI.

PRICKETT: I think it was six months. They were running, I believe, two courses.

Q: Did you like it? Was it high quality?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes, it was. And we took the Graduate Record Exams in economics when we finished the course, and the general average of the average Foreign Service officer who had completed the FSI course scored in the 90th percentile of the national Graduate Record Exams in economics. Of course, we were motivated, and we were more mature than college undergrads. This was Graduate Records, that is, of people completing the bachelor's. So FSI held itself out as offering the equivalent of an undergraduate major in economics, and I think it's fair to say that that's what we had. And even University of Oklahoma, which offered courses in several different subjects on a . . . you come in for a week and take the course, or they come in for a week. They offer the courses in several different locations. And they gave graduate credit for some of the work we had done in

the Foreign Service Institute. I later did all the coursework but did not complete a master's degree from Norman.

Q: Do you regret that?

PRICKETT: To a point, just because I hate to start anything and not finish it. I don't think it made any career difference, but there was subject matter that would have been worth writing up for a thesis, and yet I was always up to my ears in plenty of stuff to do without writing a thesis.

Q: Then you stayed in the Department after that?

PRICKETT: I was in the Office of Economic and Business Affairs — E Bureau and then EB, as they call it. And I was in the Office of Trade Policy. And my first was in a division called STA, which I called the “import desk” because we were the State Department's watchdog office on potentially protectionist measures that were being taken elsewhere in the government, and also we had the job of answering congressional correspondence when somebody was complaining about their business being damaged by imports or whatever. And so we were the free traders or the liberal trade voice in the government.

Q: Cordell Hull would have been happy about that.

PRICKETT: Very, very — he of the “wecipwocal twade agweements (reciprocal trade agreements).”

Q: But it was the —

PRICKETT: I was the anti-dumping expert of the State Department.

Q: But was it a good job? Did you feel fulfilled in any way?

PRICKETT: Yes and no, and I think a lot of it depended on my own learning what it was that we were doing, and also on the supervision that I had. It was pretty mechanical at first, and my supervisor, the division chief, was a kind of a martinet, and we seemed to be spending an awful lot of time with nitpicking. I'm not very good at the formalistic stuff, anyway. I like to try to find something meaningful to sink into. Then there was a change at the head of the office, and suddenly we were into real policy and answering all these piddly letters, which I guess as the most junior guy in the office came to me. But suddenly we were into some really serious trade policy stuff. Imported shoes, of all things.

Q: Bally?

PRICKETT: Not quite so much. But shoes and electronics.

Q: Is this in the dumping category?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: Who was dumping on us?

PRICKETT: Well, the argument was that . . . Well, actually there was dumping and so-called “countervailing duties.” In other words, if the foreign producer is subsidizing his production, and we can determine what the amount of that subsidy is, our law requires a so-called countervailing duty to be applied to those imports to offset the subsidy so that our producers are playing on a level field.

Q: You were sort of investigative.

PRICKETT: Well, I was actually watch-dogging the investigators. The direct government responsibility in these matters was in Treasury — at first. It later moved over to Commerce. But in the late '60's it was in Treasury, and the head, I think, was a deputy assistant secretary named Matt Marx, who was also of the liberal trade philosophy, and

he welcomed our presence and interest, and so it was fun and easy to do. Now let's see, there came a time when shoe producers in the United States thought they were being harmed by imports and the dumping thing. The countervailing duty did not require a finding of injury to our domestic industry. If there were subsidies, then you countervailed. Dumping, on the other hand, required sales at less than either production cost or at less than the price that things were being sold at home. In other words, you're selling cheap overseas and selling at a high price domestic market. And if there was injury to a US industry, then dumping duties were applied. If we didn't have any such industry, why then, what the hell, let them ship us cheap products; we'll be more prosperous as a result.

Q: Did the Congress get involved in this?

PRICKETT: Congress had, of course, established the legislation in the first place, and every now and again they had hearings, and their constituents would holler if they felt they were being hurt and weren't getting relief from the Administration. So it was fairly sensitive stuff. The domestic shoe industry was going through problems of its own. Shoes and textiles were having trouble, and one of the things that illustrates the kind of trouble they were having was the situation in New England. New England was going from low-tech to high-tech, and the electronics industry was expanding in New England, and labor unions were gaining strength in New England, which meant that wages were going up in New England. Well, this put textiles and shoes in a difficult position, because they were a low-wage industry in what was becoming a high-wage area. So all along — what is it, Route 128? — and elsewhere up around Boston, the electronics business was attracting workers. And on up into New England, the shoe companies and the textile mills were having a harder and harder time. Well, it's true also that shoes and textiles were being imported in those days, and it's a whole lot easier to say that you're being injured by imports than by the fact that you have to keep paying minimum wage in order to make a go of it in your industry. And so the tendency was to blame the imports. Well, the Department of Commerce was very receptive to these calls, and there was a lot of information in Commerce that Commerce was not bringing to the Trade Staff Committee.

The Trade Staff Committee included representatives from lots of different government agencies at the staff level.

Q: Why didn't they?

PRICKETT: Well, because the —

Q: Turf?

PRICKETT: Turf and votes and the constituency.

Q: Oh, yes.

PRICKETT: Congress people, as you said.

Q: Okay.

PRICKETT: The places where the manufacturing took place were not the same places where the retailers were making money. We had retailers from New York and Washington, DC, who were very much in favor of more free trade, and the general economic proposition that everybody's a little better off under free trade. That generalized prosperity doesn't cut it against a few people who are losing jobs. They're really hurting, and we're just feeling a little better off. So the political clout is with the protectionists on this kind of thing.

Well, I became the department's shoe expert, and the question was what's going to happen? My boss, Joe O'Mahoney, and I went to a lot of Trade Staff Committee meetings, and it was partly Joe's coming in as division head and partly the fact that this issue came up and he passed it on to me that made that job become a lot of fun.

Q: And that lasted how long?

PRICKETT: Oh, let's see. That was, I think, my first two or three years back in the Department.

Q: 1968 was FSI.

PRICKETT: Well, '68-69, so that by January, I think. . . . The last half of '68 was FSI. Then I think it was January of '69. I took office the same time that Richard Nixon did, in trade policy. Some time during that time, Murray Chutner, who was one of Nixon's hatchet men, was the Special Trade Representative, so we had some dealings with him at the time.

Q: What was he trying to do, the trade representative? Was it compatible with what you were trying to do?

PRICKETT: No, I don't think so. I think he was trying to guess what Nixon wanted, and he and a number of people — career people, too — were trying to advise Nixon to do what they thought he was going to do. Al Garland was a man who came over to the trade representative's office from Commerce, and in this whole shoebox of stuff, people were coming up with findings of injury that they had statistics on how many companies had gone out of business. Well, this was a quick-in and quick-out business. Commerce was reporting the companies that had gone out of business and they were not reporting the companies that had gone into business. They were reporting the companies that had failed up in New England; they were not reporting the new companies that had been formed down in Virginia, Tennessee and Missouri and the like. They were the small manufacturing outfits, but they didn't get into Wolverine, the Hush Puppies, Genesco Shoes — I've forgotten the names of some of these, but boy, I sure knew them at the time. And so we were digging out Commerce data and dishing it up to the Trade Staff Committees, and it was so galling to them that they took to not telling us when they were going to meet. Well, we had some friends in the private sector who were ratting on them and telling us when the next meeting was, and we would show up and their jaws would drop, and they couldn't say, “You're not supposed to be here.”

Q: Did they chair that committee?

PRICKETT: STR chaired it, that is, the trade representative's office. Most of the meetings took place in STR. And so we were bringing in data and stuff that they didn't want. One time, I think Al Garland had prepared a paper, and the trick was they were going to find injury, but they were going to stop short of imposing duties. They were going to go for "adjustment assistance," which basically means that you're ponying up some money to try to help firms modernize and compete against the import competition or to buy them out of the industry. Worker adjustment assistance meant that the workers could go to be retrained in some other industry. Firm adjustment assistance could mean all kinds of things. People weren't really too sure what it would do, but it didn't sound as protectionist as tariffs. So they came up with the proposal that we go ahead and allow a finding of injury. Now what was the Tariff Commission, and later became . . . not the Trade Commission but something else — the International Trade Commission, that's it. They were the one's responsible for finding injury, and they hadn't found it. But the idea was that the Administration would take the case to the Tariff Commission and look for a finding of injury.

Well, let's see. We had a meeting in our office. Walter Hollis, who was a State Department lawyer who knew the GATT, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, quite possibly as well as any person living on the planet — he was a crusty, little old guy who really knew the GATT through and through — well, we were in Joe O'Mahoney's office, and Walter said, "Well, they can find injury, and if we hold them off at adjustment assistance, maybe it won't be too bad." Joe said, "What do you think about that, Russ?" I said, "I think it's a slippery slope. I think if we once knuckle under on the issue of injury, they'll say, well, this injury is continuing, and adjustment assistance isn't alleviating it, and we'll be up to our ass in tariffs before we know it." Well, we talked around a while, and Walter and Joe agreed. So then we went, I think it was, to John Renner, who was the deputy assistant secretary for trade policy of the Economic Bureau. We persuaded him, and we got a

meeting with Philip Trezise, who was the assistant secretary for economic and business affairs. I had done a paper with the options — as Option A, Option B, and so forth — and the first option was essentially do nothing to fight the finding of injury, and then it worked all the way up. And we sat down, and Joe was late to the meeting. Walter Hollis was there. I don't remember if Renner was there. Phil looked at it and said, “Well, Option A isn't an option, is it?” “Well, sir,” I said, “we would like you to hear us on that.” About that time, O'Mahoney came into the office and said, “Have I missed anything?” I said, “Well, I think you almost missed the whole ball game, Joe.” Well, Phil was willing to hear what we had to say, and he backed us up, at least as a first position, before there was to be a fall-back or something like that. He said, “Yes, you can take this in as your initial bargaining position.” We held them off for four years. It wasn't until Joe and I were both gone that any tariffs went in on shoes. We showed up, as I said, for meetings when people didn't expect us to. One time, Al Garland brought out a 20- or 30-page paper that was a summary of the industry situation and so forth, and it was totally one-sided, and we got it on noon of one day — and he said, “If anybody has any questions or suggestions about this, we'd like it back in 24 hours,” by noon of the following day. Joe brought this in to my desk and said, “Russ, I think we've got our work cut out for us.” And I went to work to write the thing, and when quitting time came, we went up to Joe's house in Bethesda, and we worked until three o'clock in the morning, until we had taken that position paper apart root and branch. We set up secretaries in relay to type our paper, and we got it back over the STR by noon the following day, and we were Horatius at the bridge, by God.

Q: You prevailed.

PRICKETT: They simply couldn't. . . . I mean, Joe was one tough Irishman.

Q: Well, that must have been very satisfying.

PRICKETT: People said, “Well, now, politically. . . . “ Somebody — who was it? — it wasn't Chutner; it was another guy who was, I think, deputy STR, and he made some

remark about “Now what are we talking about, politics here, and what I think the President wants . . .” and so forth. And Joe, God bless him, said, “You know, I look around this room,” he said, “and I see quite a few pretty good economists here, but I don't see anybody who has ever run for political office, and I'm not being paid to play guessing games about what the President wants to do politically. I'm being paid to give him economic advice, and do you know what? I think the rest of us are too.” I mean he just. . . . and you know, people who are used to these polite bureaucratic meetings don't know how to handle stuff that comes straight from the shoulder, and so —

Q: It made your job worthwhile.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. And fun. I didn't mind 3:30 in the morning if you go in the next day and you slay the dragon. We were having a ball.

Q: And all you were doing was enforcing the law.

PRICKETT: We were calling_____

Q: You weren't ideological about it.

PRICKETT: That's right.

Q: You believed in free trade, but you also believed in the law.

PRICKETT: If we hadn't had the facts, they'd have blown us away. But we were embarrassing the people over in Commerce because we were coming forward with their data about the startup of shoe factories, data that they had not presented. It was a ball.

Can we take a little break?

Q: Yes, I think so.

PRICKETT: You asked if I was getting promoted all along during this time, and the fact was, I was not getting promoted in my time in the Economic Bureau, not until almost the end of it. I'd been promoted fairly quickly while I was over in Belgrade. I went from FSO-6 — and my predecessor in the commercial attach#'s job was a Class 4 officer — so that was good. I was going in two grades under, and I went from 6 to 5 to 4 in the period while I was over there.

Q: Four years.

PRICKETT: So that was good. Then it wasn't until almost the end of my Stateside tour that I made 3. It took a long, long time, and I was in the States for a total of six years before —

Q: So that's '68 to —

PRICKETT: '68 to '74.

Q: — to '74.

PRICKETT: Yes. I was going to say, my boss, Joe O'Mahoney, was transferred over to be the head of the division in Trade Policy that handled some international affairs, including the UNCTAD, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the conference that became an organization with its headquarters in Geneva. And basically, this was dealing with the developing countries on trade issues. Often it meant that we went there to let the developing countries beat up on us and our European colleagues. The European colleagues always made conciliatory noises and said they were willing to do this that and the other thing that they had no intention of doing, and we were more moralistic about it, and so if we didn't intend to do it, we said no. That meant we took all the flack. We took the lightning, and our European friends sort of smiled and were happy that we were there to take the flack.

Q: So you got to travel?

PRICKETT: Yes, I went to Geneva on a number of delegations, and we were dealing with, oh, let's see. . . . The developing countries had a thing about nationalizing enterprises in their countries, and of course we were dead set against that without proper compensation. On the other hand, the developing countries also thought that as a matter of right and justice we ought freely to share our developing technology with them. Now here they are demanding the right to nationalize. They're talking about their patrimony, the mineral or forestry or whatever it is, deposits that were present in their country — without any effort by them — and so they have a natural right to that. On the other hand, we've developed our technology by dint of our own brain power or whatever, we might say, and they're claiming that we ought, in right and equity, to share that with them. It reminds me of a saying that my dad used to have: What's yours is mine, what's mine's my own.

At any rate, I did have a chance to go to Geneva on delegations on a number of topics. I remember one time the issue of textile quotas came up, and while we weren't talking about dumping there — we were just plain flat-out protectionist, that we only allowed so much of certain kinds of textiles from certain countries — and this was a sore point, of course, in our dealings with a lot of countries. Countries sort of graduated, of course, up the line. We had a textile agreement early on with Japan. Japan soon got out of the textile business and had their own textile quotas with their own textile suppliers. On one occasion I was presenting the US position — I think it was to the textiles committee — in Geneva, and I called attention to the fact that a lot of the countries that were supplying us would never be able to compete with China if we had no textile quotas at all, that they could be damned glad that they had a piece of our market guaranteed by the quota system or they'd be blown away by still cheaper competition. Of course, markets were volatile in those days. Things were changing. It was funny. I had a few notes, and I was speaking from fact, of course, but this was not a prepared position paper, except that it was generally agreed on in the government, but we hadn't, you know, done these cleared papers and had every jot and title approved and cleared and whatever. People were asking me for copies of my speech! I said, “I'm sorry, I don't have any.” But I had managed to say in a fairly

sympathetic way that from the point of view of the people who were there in my audience, they stood to lose a lot more if we were to revoke our system of quotas.

Q: Wasn't this transcribed in the committee?

PRICKETT: Well, I forget now what level. I think it was paraphrased and summarized, but transcripts weren't available, and they were interested in that.

Q: Multilateral diplomacy you would call that.

PRICKETT: Yes, and of course, in Geneva. It was fun to go over there.

Q: Wonderful city in those days. You could afford it.

PRICKETT: Almost. And of course, on per diem and staying in a fairly modest hotel within walking distance of the US mission, and I'd get out every morning and I'd run alongside the lake, and I'd see the sun coming up over Mont Blanc — ah, it was gorgeous.

Q: Good life.

PRICKETT: And my boss was in Washington, and the guy that I was dealing with in the mission over there, Bill Culbert, the number two guy, I think, on the economic side, wanted me to come over and take Koczanik's place as the UNCTAD officer in Geneva. That's the one man in the entire US government who had full-time responsibility for the organization UNCTAD. The rest of us, it was just pieces of our responsibility. You can bet that I wanted to do that, and as we came up to the end of my tour of duty, John Renner, the deputy assistant secretary , was pushing it. Bill Culbert had written something saying, yes, he'd sure welcome me as a member of his staff over there. Phil Trezise, I think, was in favor of it. Well, two things happened, and it was a shame. One was that Henry Kissinger went to Mexico and came away with the opinion that some of our Latin American guys had blinders on and didn't see much beyond their immediate purview, and therefore we needed to institute a program where Foreign Service officers would go someplace that was out

of their traditional line. This became the Global Assignments Program, or GLOP — you remember?

Q: Yes, I remember.

PRICKETT: So —

Q: So you were GLOPed.

PRICKETT: There were two things: one, I was going to go to Geneva, and the International Organizations Bureau slipped a guy of theirs in ahead of me; and the fallback was to go to Bonn as deputy chief of the Economic Section, I think. I had good German and would have been happy to head over there, but then, as I said, the learned doctor came up with this edict, and I think as most of us knew at the time, this was going to last just about one or two assignment cycles and then everything will revert. People who don't come up for assignment are going to have a bit of an advantage here, because the rest of us are going to get GLOPed, and they're going down the smooth highway of their career paths.

Q: I can't wait to hear where you'd been assigned.

PRICKETT: I was sent kicking and screaming, if you can imagine, to Tokyo. Now if you're going to be sent someplace kicking and screaming, where you don't have a chance to learn the language and. . . . End of Tape 4, Side A, begin Tape 4, Side B

PRICKETT: . . . kicking and screaming to Tokyo, which is a fine place to go if you have to go someplace kicking and screaming. My last gasp as an UNCTAD officer was to be a member of the 40-some-country drafting committee of the charter of rights and duties of states. This was the so-called Echeverria Charter, named after the president of Mexico, who had made a call for this. We were on the drafting committee, the US delegation, and we had a series of meetings in Geneva to put this thing together, and the final one was in

Mexico City. So Steve Schwebel, who was I believe deputy legal advisor at the time, and I were co-deputy heads of that delegation on the so-called Echeverria Charter.

Q: That must have been fun.

PRICKETT: Yes, it happened that our delegation up in New York had given the farm away. They had agreed to a whole bunch of stuff that was totally against US policy, and again, I'm happy to put the blame on the International Organizations Bureau because they're always looking to keep things smooth and happy and so forth, whereas it was us over in EB who had to deal with the tough guys, in Treasury especially, and elsewhere in the US Government, on issues like nationalization and so on. So we wound up saying no, no, no, no, no to a whole bunch of stuff in Mexico on the final day.

We'd had — let's see, it was one other delegation I was on before we get away from that. We went to a meeting of the Inter-American ECOSAC meeting in Bogot#, Colombia, and this was one they were looking for somebody from the Trade Representative's Office. Harold Malmgren — was the deputy STR at that time. He was a great trade expert. And the IO people asked Malmgren to be on our delegation to the IA-ECOSAC, and Malmgren said, “Oh, you don't need me. You've got Prickett on that delegation.” Well, it turned out that this was another one of those things, that Inter-American business where we sort of agreed to get together with the Latinos and let them beat up on us. They could gang up on us there, and we didn't have our European cohorts to hold with us. And they were pushing a whole bunch of issues that were favored LDC issues, including this nationalization thing, including commodity agreements, including a whole bunch of things where our national position was much more free-market oriented than theirs was. Well, the doggoned delegates started saying that we, the United States, had agreed to all of this in one of the UNCTAD meetings in Geneva. I was the only guy who had been in that UNCTAD meeting in Geneva, and I knew they were lying in their teeth. So every evening, these speeches would be made long into the night at the meetings. We would get the copies of the translations and so forth, and for the next day's rebuttal, it was my job to write our

rep's responses to them. So we'd get all that stuff. We'd go to a late dinner in Bogot#. You know the drill on stuff like this. We'd come back to the Hotel Tequendama, where we had both our offices and our rooms — way, way, way up in this hotel — and I'd put out my order for breakfast the next morning and leave a wake-up call for something like six o'clock, or whatever, and I'd get up, and I'd have my pot of Colombian coffee and my big, fresh pineapple, and I would eat my breakfast, and I'd sit there in my robe and slippers and pajamas. The sun is coming not up and over but around one of the mountains and shining into my room in the Hotel Tequendama, and I was writing the responses. After the first day or two, we had to do so much of this that I didn't have to do the daily reporting cable, or take my turn in writing the daily reporting cable; I was doing the rebuttal. Now as a college debater, my thing was rebuttal. And so day after day, this drill went down, and again, it was fun.

Q: What was the outcome?

PRICKETT: Well, none of this stuff went down by majority vote, you know. It had to be consensus. But there was also a very strong sense that if something was said, and it wasn't challenged, then it must have been agreed to, so we had to get on the record. That's basically what had to happen. And this was my really only experience with the Spanish language. We would have the text of some of these speeches would be handed to us in Spanish, and then we could put the earphones on and hear it in English, and I would make marginal notes down this text. You'd see enough cognates and so forth, so I learned that paices en desarrollo does not mean 'countries in disarray'; it means 'countries in development.' But otherwise, this was my three-week Spanish course, and by golly, when I got on the plane to go home and read the newspaper account in Spanish of our meeting, I could read every word because I had read them all before.

Q: It's immersed.

PRICKETT: Of course, with any other vocabulary, of poetry or anything else, I'd be totally helpless, but I did know the subject matter of that meeting pretty well. Some of us went to Cartagena for a little while and spent some time on the beach before coming back.

Q: That was at the end of your economic experience, I mean before you were GLOPped.

PRICKETT: That's right. That's before I was GLOPped.

Q: When you went to Tokyo.

PRICKETT: Actually, that was the penultimate thing. The last one was the Mexico City thing, but this was reflecting back into the middle of it.

Then I went to Tokyo, and as I said, I didn't have a chance to learn Japanese before going, and Japanese language study was a long, long course. I had to make do with an hour a day while I was on the job, and most of us couldn't always make time for that hour a day, either. So I learned to say biromo itan kurasai, which means 'another beer, please.' And some other things that sound very, very Japanese but basically mean 'driver, please turn right at the next signal.' But I did learn enough Japanese so that I was able to take my kids and a bunch of other teenagers to a ski resort up in the mountains, and I was the only one there with any Japanese at all. But in the land of the blind, the guy with one eye is king.

Q: Well, that was how many years, Tokyo?

PRICKETT: I was in Tokyo '74 to '76. It was to have been a three-year tour, but my second wife left and came home after, I think, a year and a half or so, and so I curtailed my tour and came back to the States after two years in Japan. But it was the Far East. I got to travel a bit. I got to Taiwan and Hong Kong and to the Philippines.

Q: You were in the Economic Section, or were you running it?

PRICKETT: Yes, let's see, I was deputy economic counselor.

Q: Oh, well, you were moving right along.

PRICKETT: Yes, and I had just been promoted to O-3, just before leaving the Department. And my predecessor was a Class 3 officer, and I think he had made 3 in that job. So it was not a bad job. On the other hand, I was writing the Economic Trends Reports on Japan, and I had been writing the Economic Trends Reports back in Belgrade from '64 on, so here I was ten years later doing essentially the same thing.

Q: For a bigger economy.

PRICKETT: Bigger economy, certainly a more significant economy in the world, of more impact on the United States, and I had supervised four or five officers in Washington, and I had three or four officers to supervise in Tokyo. I had a very high batting average getting promotions for my people. One year in Washington I got three out of five, and one that I didn't get had just been promoted the previous year, and it was essentially the same thing in Tokyo. I was always really happy when I could get people some recognition for what they had been doing.

Q: And who was ambassador and DCM?

PRICKETT: The DCM was Tom Shoesmith. Tom Shoesmith never got an ambassadorial appointment. I think he was cross-wise with some folks up on the Hill.

Q: Yes.

PRICKETT: I believe they eventually gave him the consul general job in Hong Kong.

Q: Oh, that's not bad.

PRICKETT: Not bad at all. It's better than a lot of ambassadorial jobs, no question about it.

Q: Of course it is. He was a Far East expert.

PRICKETT: Yes. And let's see. The ambassador was a guy from Minnesota, as a matter of fact, who'd been at the University along with Eric Sevareid and Bud Schulman and a bunch of people. He was a former Secretary of Labor and a very genial fellow. We got along great. We talked about the Minnesota Mafia. He did some very nice things at the embassy, and he ran basically a happy shop, and it was fun serving under him. And he would come back from consultations in Washington saying, “They see things as very quiet out here, and they just want us to keep it that way.” We had an era of good feeling with the Japanese at the time.

Q: Trade was in balance, was it?

PRICKETT: No, but the deficit wasn't intolerable, either.

Q: Was this the time of the Japanese economic boom?

PRICKETT: Yes, it was. Now let me think. I think they were. . . . No, I think they were in recession, which meant they had annual growth of about three percent, we were all wishing we could have a Japanese recession. The dollar was sometimes over 300 yen, which is a lot of yen for the dollar, and still, the Japanese restaurants were so expensive that you had to read the menu outside the door before you set foot because you could go broke in a Japanese restaurant.

Q: So that didn't make life very comfortable.

PRICKETT: Well, there were plenty. You could go to the Yakitori places and you could go to the noodle shops, and there were nice restaurants, and we had very good Japanese staff who could give us good advice on these things. And we could travel. We had to drive on the left side of the road, or we could take the bullet train — that was fun.

Q: And housing?

PRICKETT: We lived in embassy housing that had been built right after the war. Our embassy had very, very valuable property right in the heart of Tokyo, and I had a four-bedroom apartment in New House. I was there with my second wife and her two little boys and my oldest daughter, and we had four bedrooms, which was the biggest of the apartment buildings. All of that now has been replaced with other buildings.

If you entertained, why the Japanese were amazed at how much space we had because they lived in such small digs themselves. And after my second wife went back to the States, I did some bachelor entertaining, and we had a balcony where I could put my charcoal grill. Beef was terribly, terribly expensive, and we had access to commissary beef, so I would always do a London broil if I was entertaining, and that went over great with the Japanese counterparts.

There was, again, an English language theater group over there, TIP, Tokyo International Players. I did some Shakespeare and some other stuff with them. And while I was there I formed a little chorus that went around and serenaded various ambassadors. The Embassy Recreation Club owned a bus, and so when we got our group of carolers together, we were able to take that bus, and we didn't have to fight parking problems or anything, and we went on two different evenings, I think, around and sang Christmas carols at the various embassies around town, and we wound up at our own ambassador's place. He was in the residence where MacArthur had lived, and had a big, big, almost like a medieval hall, where MacArthur had had his desk at one end of it, and people who approached him had to come the whole intimidating distance of that long hall, which had, you know, nice beams and rafters atop it all.

Q: What about MacArthur? How is he revered by the Japanese at that stage? Was he still the great hero?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. Very much, very much. And we were considerate, and we had been very considerate of the Japanese. The predecessor — doggone! Why can't I remember our ambassador's name? But his predecessor was Edwin Reischauer, who was the great Harvard Japan scholar married to a Japanese woman. And so the Japanese knew that we had been very thoughtful. Again, it was Jack Kennedy who appointed Reischauer to that one. He was able to get some very fine people working for him in important positions.

Oh, I found out some of the backstage stories about how my friends in the International Organizations Bureau had let me down up in New York from a Japanese counterpart who had been there at the time. He told me that the guy, an old AID hand, sponsored by IO, had been actually absent from the chair of the Committee of the Whole in the Economic Committee up in New York — had been absent from the chair when a bunch of stuff went through that later was so embarrassing to us down in Mexico and elsewhere. But he just couldn't be bothered with it. That was a little late to find those things out.

Q: Well, but that's good to know.

PRICKETT: Yes. I guess because of my previous experience, I had the job of liaising with the Japanese on international multilateral economic matters. And I was able because with this one guy that we had shared some experiences with before, I was able to find out what the Japanese were planning to do and so on. There was in it a bit of embarrassment. We had a very able Agency station over there, and it seems that they had some folks in the Japanese Government that were telling them things, and they were getting some second-hand information about what the Japanese delegation was going to advocate when they went into some of these multilateral meetings. Sometimes their stuff was wrong. Sometimes they were getting it second- and third-hand from inside the ministry. I complained about it, and nobody thought we ought to fuss with the Agency about it, so we didn't, but my analogy was — and somebody said — “Well, you know, isn't so-and-so responsible for this?” No, I'm responsible for it. And so-and-so, of course, was a reserve officer, had a reserve commission, et cetera. I said, “It's damned embarrassing when you

go right up to the front door and you ring the bell and you present your credentials and you go in and you ask, in all honesty, what are your plans here, to find that somebody else has been skulking around to the back door trying to sneak information from the servants."

Q: Yes.

PRICKETT: And that kind of thing I'd heard echoed from colleagues, you know, with experience elsewhere. I remember a friend who had served in Panama said that he couldn't get people to talk to him because other people were paying him to talk to them — and this was when we were into the Canal negotiations. And that can poison the wells of information.

Well, what else about Tokyo. I came back a little early and went to the Middle East Bureau, but let's see if I can recall what else. They had a good tennis court in the embassy complex.

Q: You were properly GLOPped.

PRICKETT: I was GLOPped well and proper.

Q: And that didn't help —

PRICKETT: Didn't help my career.

Q: Didn't help the career at all.

PRICKETT: Not only that, but I was pretty good at what I was doing, but I heard second-hand (Tom Shoesmith was advising a political officer who was asking should he go back and take the FSI Economics Course. "Naw," he said, "we've got people like Prickett to do economics. You ought to stay with your political specialty."

Q: But did it, as you predicted... ?

PRICKETT: Oh, sure. Our economic minister (we had a minister and not a counselor, and I was deputy counselor and not minister) had served a tour in Personnel, and he had coined the term GLOP — or so he said. I don't know if that ranks Al Gore's inventing the Internet or not.

Q: Mike Ely was over there as economic minister at one stage. That must have been later.

PRICKETT: Yes, because I had a lot of dealings with Mike when we were both in Washington. In fact, now let me think. Mike was head of the I NR economic office while I headed one of the divisions, so we worked together.

Q: You were the guy in Algiers.

PRICKETT: I had the trade finance division in INR. And then I visited Mike in Paris later.

Q: He was at, not the embassy?

PRICKETT: OECD.

Q: OECD, yes. He was a good man. I just couldn't understand why he didn't make chief of mission.

PRICKETT: It was Harry Gilmore, my DCM in Belgrade in my latest tour, who said, and he was giving me top grades and I wasn't getting promoted, wasn't making it into the Senior Foreign Service, and I had three successive years with absolutely everything on the top, and he said, “Russ, I'm convinced they take these files and throw them down the stairs and promote on the basis of the order that they fall in.”

Q: But were a 3 when you left, left Tokyo.

PRICKETT: I was a 3 when I got there, and I was a 3 when I left, and I was a 3 when I finally retired. Although that became a 1 when they recast the service.

Q: Now where did you go after Tokyo?

PRICKETT: I went back to the States and into the NEA Bureau.

Q: Oh, on the economic side?

PRICKETT: Well, I was the ranking economic officer. It was regional affairs. I forgot. What did we call it? RP or something like that. It was the Regional Affairs Office, which covered the Pol-Mil and Economic and...

Q: That was a new area for you, the Middle East.

PRICKETT: Oh, sure it was, and I was a little grumpy about it, and I actually requested a review of the assignment, and you know, it found it's way into my efficiency report that I had been less than pleased with that assignment. This was back when people didn't do grievances, or at least I didn't. It would have been grievable, because I got low-ranked my first year back in NEA. At the time I thought grieving but that wasn't what somebody did on this, so I didn't file a grievance, but it may well have been the factor that kept me from getting into the Senior Foreign Service. Now as I look back at it, whether I would have been better off getting into the Senior Foreign Service or not, I don't know. We'll follow up my later life later on.

Q: That's discouraging.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. It was a hell of a note.

Q: How many years did you have there?

PRICKETT: I was there, let's see, when did I come back?

Q: '76.

PRICKETT: I came back in '76. I had a wonderful trip across the country with one of my daughters, of my two twins. All of my kids were having some trouble with their mother's second husband, and my three older daughters then all spent some time over in Tokyo with me. For a while I was over there as a single parent of teenage daughters. You can imagine what fun that was. My kids were on the wild side.

Q: They weren't damaged in the process?

PRICKETT: We were very, very lucky they were not.

Q: And you left the country.

PRICKETT: We all survived and we left. I don't know if that's one of the reasons that she hasn't opted for the Foreign Service as a career or not. She was doing a lot of work in social anthropology.

Q: Is that the one that accompanied you cross-country?

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: You took your time?

PRICKETT: Yes. We were in Hawaii on the 4th of July, 1976, for the big Bicentennial Day and couldn't find any fireworks, so we walked up and down the port in Lahaina and somebody in some kind of fishing boat or something, with a big cockpit anyway, a motorboat, “Come on aboard. Greatest country in the world. We're celebrating. Come on aboard and have a beer.” And we said, “Maybe a little later. We're walking up and down the harbor.” And we didn't find anything else, and we did step aboard, and we drank beer with them.

Q: Did spending time with you make a difference?

PRICKETT: Yes. She was the wild one, and she's the first one to settle down and raise a family. She's in business now, doing pretty well as a production manager for an outfit that puts library resources on CD-ROM. She's the one who kept her German alive too, from her mother's experience. And she did a couple of tours of duty in the Goethe-Institut in Europe. All this goes over to when we were in Belgrade later on.

But the most significant thing, I think, that happened when I was in NEA Bureau was that. . . . Well, first I had planned a familiarization trip to the area, and I just procrastinated and it didn't happen. But looking ahead to my next assignment, I was thinking, well, you know, there's a country out there that has a lot of resources, mineral wealth, agriculture, they've got far-reaching plans as to how they're going to do their development after very, very intelligent guidance on all this, and not only that, they've got oil and gas resources so that they can finance this development to move into the 20th century and so forth.

Q: What country was that?

PRICKETT: And I was thinking, at the end of my cycle in NEA, the economic counselor's position was coming up. There is a real interesting post. But I had just met my present wife. Rose was up in New York, and she was a singer. And she had made some trips down to the Washington area singing, and I had started to commute to see her up in New York. We had met at a concert where Ron Hedlund, a fellow that I sang with in college, was singing in New York. I had timed my skiing vacation in New England so that I could stop and take in Ron's concert. And three different dates fell through, to go to that concert, right? And my friend Ron and his wife said, “Well, would you like to come with us to the artists' party after the concert?” and I did, and I got to chatting with an opera soloist, who was Rose Taylor, who is my wife now. One thing led to another. So I was courting Rose, and I didn't want to go overseas. I had possibly an inside track for that job, but I didn't want to go overseas, so I didn't bid for it, so a guy named Moorehead Kennedy spent 444 days as a guest of the Ayatollah in Tehran. So how about that?

Q: How about that? The luck of the Irish.

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: So you spent the rest of the time in —

PRICKETT: So I went to INR.

Q: On the economic side?

PRICKETT: Yes, I was in the Economic Office and headed up the Trade and Finance Division. That's when I worked for Mike Ely. We were doing a lot of stuff. Of course, you read a lot of spooky traffic and stuff. And among the things that we were doing, besides providing — oh, what was our economic undersecretary's name at the time? I forget now — but we were doing papers for him on gold reserves and all kinds of stuff, but we were monitoring the impact of the economic sanctions on Iran, and the financial sanctions and so forth, and what was happening.

Q: That's interesting.

PRICKETT: We were writing almost daily updates. They were called “Richardson memos” in those days? But they were to the Secretary, and it was back-of-the-book items, I guess, for the daily intelligence briefer. And we would get stuff back that would say, “The President wants to see everything you have on this.” Signed Z. B. Zbigniew Brzezinski. So we were doing some —

Q: That was Jimmy Carter and Brzezinski.

PRICKETT: That's right, yes.

Q: Well that was —

PRICKETT: Ron Spiers headed up INR at that time. We had known each other over in ACDA.

Q: So that was a lively office.

PRICKETT: It was. It was.

Q: You were working, you know, with quality guys.

PRICKETT: I had a couple of problems there. One was that I was shorthanded, and one of my guys was goofing off. I mean, he was literally goofing off. He would disappear for hours out of a day, and one time he disappeared for two weeks. And I tried to get him transferred out. It was a hell of a battle. But meanwhile I had to do his work. So I was busting my ass, and it was good work; it was serious stuff. And you know, you show up in that inner office, and you read all that spooky traffic, and then you have to reduce it to something that busy people can absorb in a hurry. Then you do your longer-term analysis pieces, too.

Our deputy office director was an economist from the Agency, and we had good relations with the folks over there, and at one point there was a young economist over at the Federal Reserve who got a bunch of economists from around government to put together a delegation, and we presented papers out at the Western Economic Association in Las Vegas. I did a paper on floating exchange rates and addressed the issue of if you allowed exchange rates to float, what the trade effect of that would be. So I had a chance to actually dabble. . . . that would have been a good subject to do a master's thesis on, but by then my economic work at the University of Oklahoma was rather dated, and I was too damned busy again to turn this stuff over.

Q: You had to give some time to focus.

PRICKETT: Goodness, yes. And I was singing regularly in the Paul Hill Chorale, where I started singing in 1968.

Q: Paul Hill Chorale — I don't know that.

PRICKETT: This is one of the choral organizations in Washington that's existed from about 1967 or 68. And we sang at the opening of the Concert Hall in the Kennedy Center and regularly sang concerts in the Concert Hall. That was our home.

Q: Was Paul Hill the conductor?

PRICKETT: Paul Hill was the conductor, yes. And we were the host chorus also for the sing-along Messiahs in the Kennedy Center. Every winter we'd be up on the stage, and the Concert Hall would fill with people who brought their Messiah scores.

Q: And your wife was in the chorus? Or she was a professional, a soloist.

PRICKETT: She was a professional. Her first gig there was as alto soloist in that sing-along Messiah.

Q: That's a wonderful solo.

PRICKETT: She had sung that for 10 years with the Philadelphia Orchestra. She had a good time. And let's see. We were married in 1978, and in the fall of '77, when she still lived in New York, I had talked to Paul, and she had come down and done the solo gig. We were married on the 23rd of December of '78, and we did our wedding reception at our own home. My sister made a trifle, which was our wedding cake, and after we took the last guests from New York back to the airport, we went over and contrived to sit next to each other onstage in the chorus, singing that sing-along Messiah. Now that event was a fairly informal thing. Paul had invited several other conductors — Norman Scribner and Martin Feinstein, who was the head of the —

Q: Really, you mean he —

PRICKETT: He wanted to conduct the “Hallelujah Chorus,” and that became a tradition. Every year, Marty Feinstein would conduct the Hallelujah Chorus. So he was doing that. Paul Hume conducted one year, and he said to the orchestra, “In four.” And the concertmaster said, “Don't you mean 'In two'?” “In four.” And he started to wave, and it was double off the tempo, and they had to start again. Paul Hume was a funny conductor. Looked like a pig trying to fly, I thought. But at any rate —

Q: But enthusiasm.

PRICKETT: — this was informal, and the conductors were coming and going, and Paul was making remarks and so forth. And so at one point in the proceedings, he said, “Now how many of you were here last year?” and maybe half the hands in the hall went up. “Well, then you will remember our alto soloist from last year, Rose Taylor.” And there was a nice patter of applause. “Well, this morning at 11:00,” he said. “Rose was married to a member of our chorale, and they're up here singing the Messiah this evening, and I call that dedication.” So Rose and I, who had contrived to sit next to each other, stood up, and we got wedding day congratulations from 2,700 people in the Concert Hall of the Kennedy Center.

Q: That's wonderful.

PRICKETT: And not only that, but the following year, when Rose was again the alto soloist, and Paul was introducing the soloists, and it was always on the 23rd, and so he said, “And our alto soloist, Rose Taylor. You may remember that on this date last year she was married to Russ Prickett in our chorale.” Rose turned around — there she is in her gown and everything — and she turned around and blew me a kiss, and I stood up and blew her a kiss, and the crowd gave us anniversary congratulations. So whenever we could, we would go back, and Paul continued to hire Rose as the alto soloist in that gig, while we were there, of course. Then '81 was our last year before going to Belgrade, and after Belgrade she came down here, immediately, directly.

So that was part of the Washington scene.

Q: You had a good tour, at least the last half, in INR.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. I always enjoyed living in Washington. I still have my house on Calvert Street.

Q: You have a house?

PRICKETT: Just off Wisconsin Avenue. I'm thinking to sell it because I've depreciated it down to zero now, and so I won't get the tax consideration that I've gotten up to now. But it's one of those row houses, and nice location, nice neighborhood, and it's walking distance from the Vice-President's digs up at the Naval Observatory.

Q: Well, now, how did you get this Belgrade assignment?

PRICKETT: I lobbied for it.

Q: It was the normal thing? You lobbied for it?

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. I knew who was there, and I — let's see — yes, I had an assignment, I was detailed over to Commerce for a while. A guy who had worked in Treasury and when the customs responsibility for dumping were transferred over to Commerce he was transferred over there, and he and I talked, and I was looking for my next assignment when I didn't want to go overseas, and my tour expired in INR. I wanted to stay on in INR, but they weren't having that. So I had to do something else, and it was either go off to the Agency and do analytical work, or transfer over to Commerce. Those were the only Washington-area assignments that were coming open at the proper time. I didn't want to commute out to the Agency, and I didn't want to work in that cloistered atmosphere out there. I liked being in town and being able to meet somebody from across town for lunch.

The amenities of being in town were just better, I thought. Out there they were a bunch of strangers, although they were good to me. They liked my writing.

Q: Sure, they needed you, honestly.

PRICKETT: But at any rate, I was over at Commerce, and I just kept checking. The books came out as to what was coming open, and so when I saw that the economic counselor job was coming open in Belgrade, I said, this was down my alley.

Q: It was done.

PRICKETT: Yes, and I went into the Personnel guy, and he said, “Yes, you've certainly got the tickets for it.” And when it came through, I was happy.

Q: You're not going to take the family with you, or maybe —

PRICKETT: Yes. No, actually, my kids were older. They were in college. They were living with their mom. They had lived with me for a time. When my first wife and I, when Hilti and I were divorced, her lawyer had proposed some stuff. . . . I practically was my own lawyer during that divorce. I had talked to this private-sector spy we had on the shoe business. His name was George Egy. He had Spanish interests — olives and shoes. And I asked George, I said, “Who do you know who's licensed to practice in both DC and in Maryland?” and he gave me a name, Joe Morgan, I think it was, a law school classmate of his. I basically did all the correspondence and wrote the documents, gave them to Joe's secretary, she typed them up, and he signed off as the attorney of record. And I had a whole divorce — my lawyer's bill was $200, for a divorce that could have been nasty.

But at any rate, her lawyer had written one of these things in the separation agreement, which became the divorce decree, “The parties recognize that the wife is a fit parent for the children, and that it is in the best interests of the children to be within the custody of the wife.” I rewrote that. I said, “The parties agree that they are both qualified to be fit

parents for their children. They agree further that at the present time it is in the children's best interests to be in the custody of the wife; however, they foresee the possibility that in the future" (for whatever considerations) "possibly for educational advantages, it could be in the best interest of the children to be in the custody of the husband." Well, by golly, the time came when all I had to do was do a little amendment of the custody agreement referring to that paragraph in the divorce decree, and bingo, my daughters, one at a time, came over to live with me in Tokyo. When my oldest daughter, Chris, was due to come back, there had been some flap raised about possible abuse of travel status by divorced FSO's, that they were parlaying vacation visitation into a whole thing, and the government was getting stuck for travel money that it shouldn't have to pay — they said. There was a freeze on all travel by dependents of divorced FSO's, and Chris was due to travel back to the United States at that time. The Personnel officer called me and said, "There's something here, Russ, you've got to see. I'm sending it over to you." I looked at it, and I dug into my files, and I said, "This does not come under these provisions. Chris is in my total custody. It isn't even a joint custody case. If it were joint custody it would be okay too." And I said, "The Department, furthermore, has copies of these documents" in the wherever it was — I knew where it was at the time — "so I suggest they be dug out," and so on and so forth. And we didn't even have to postpone her travel by a day.

Q: Wow.

PRICKETT: I drafted that cable, took it down to the Personnel Office, she sent it off, and I think the following day she said she had been told by telephone that Chris's travel was okay and that they were sending the telegram confirming it and we'd get it over the weekend. It was another one of those times where I could have sprained my shoulder patting myself on the back, but I had been a decent enough lawyer to foresee some possibilities, and it came home.

Q: You prevailed.

PRICKETT: Yes. So all of that . . . . [End of Tape 4, Side B; Tape 5, Side A]

Q: I'm Hoffacker interviewing Prickett.

PRICKETT: We talked about getting my oldest daughter back from Tokyo, and I was patting myself on the back for my foresight as a lawyer in drawing up the terms of the divorce decree from my first wife, Hilti Hermann. I had gone to Tokyo shortly after my second marriage, to a lady named Lee Moore, who had two little boys of her own, and my daughter Chris had come with us; so we had a household of five, and we had one of the large apartments in New House in Tokyo, one of the four-bedroom ones. After a year in Tokyo, Lee and I separated, and she went back to the States. And I put in for curtailment of my tour from three years down to two. At the same time, I was also concerned to let as many of my daughters as possible share in the Tokyo experience. At that time, Christine, who was born in 1958, was at sea. Well, she was in high school, and so were my next two daughters, Sylvia and Suzanne, who were born in 1960. By 1974, Sylvia and Suzanne were 14, so Chris was 16. And Sylvia came over when Lee and Chris and Lee's boys and I had been there for six months. Then when I curtailed my tour, I thought, What about Suzanne? We got Suzanne over there for the last six months of the tour, and having curtailed because I was a bit at loose ends after the end of my second marriage and thought I needed to get back to home base, we wound up returning to the States, leaving Tokyo on the 1st of July, 1976.

I might just say that skipping back to 1975, an interesting thing had happened. The Metropolitan Opera came to Tokyo, and they were doing three operas: they were doing La Traviata and Carmen and La Boh#me. For Carmen and La Boh#me they needed extras, and they needed what we would call in Japan “round-eyed” extras — Caucasians, in other words. So they came to the cultural affairs officer at the American embassy, and he put the word out, and several of us were willing to sacrifice for the cause and appear on stage with the Metropolitan Opera. So we were on stage with the likes of James McCracken, Marilyn Horne, Luciano Pavarotti, and Jos# van Damm. That was quite a thrill. I was literally a

spear-carrier for Jos# van Damm when he was Escamillo, the toreador in Carmen, and walked through the set as one of the soldiers in the outdoor scene in La Boh#me. So that was great fun. And of course, when the ambassador gave a party for the visiting stars from the Metropolitan Opera, why he included those of us from the embassy who had been in the shows as well, and so it was possible to mix and mingle and chat with these wonderful, wonderful musicians and great folk. It was great fun. Their stage director, Bodo Igesz, was with the show, and later on I had occasion to meet him here in Austin, because he came to be our stage director with the Austin Lyric Opera. I'll get to the Austin Lyric Opera later on.

So back to 1976. We left on the 1st of July. We flew to Hawaii. The flight was long enough between Tokyo and Washington that you get a 24-hour break as part of your bargain with the Department. I took longer than that. Suzanne was homesick, and I think she had a boyfriend back in Maryland, so she didn't want to take the slow route home. So she flew from Hawaii after a little time in Waikiki back home to Washington. Sylvia and I flew to San Francisco. We rented a car. We drove down the Pacific Coast Highway as far as San Diego, and then we headed east to Tucson, Arizona, where my brother lived, and Sylvia's closest cousin, Karen, and then we went up to the Grand Canyon, and we went through Colorado. We went up to Denver, where I had a cousin living, and then we headed east again, and through Nebraska we took a left at Des Moines, Iowa, went up to Minnesota, where I was raised. I don't believe Sylvia had been to the source of the Mississippi River before that, so we went up there. We visited my dad and my stepmother in St. Paul — actually in the suburb of White Bear Lake. Then we crossed on over from northern Minnesota to Duluth and over into Wisconsin and to the Sault Ste. Marie, down through lower Michigan and up into Canada, passing by Niagara falls and down through the Finger Lakes region of New York, and finally wound up — and it was about the first of August — wound up in Washington, DC. So that was our Bicentennial odyssey across the United States, the bearded hippie-looking dad and his hippie-looking daughter, driving through the countryside, Sylvia playing her guitar as we went some of the time. And it was quite a trip.

As often happens in the Foreign Service, I came back feeling that I had cut my travel time, and my home leave, right to the bone because the folks back in Washington had been insisting that I had to arrive no later than August 1st, and the reaction when I arrived was almost, Well, what are you doing here already? Many of us have had that experience. I had written ahead to Personnel the NEA assignment, because I didn't have any specialty in NEA or Middle Eastern affairs or Arabic or anything of the sort.

Q: But you were the senior economic officer in that office.

PRICKETT: I was the senior economic officer in the Office of Regional Affairs.

Q: Okay, I got that.

PRICKETT: Now Joe Twinam, who was the deputy assistant secretary, had considerable economic experience. A number of the political officers had been dealing with oil countries, and so they were by no means lacking in economic skills, but in terms of job description anyway, I was entitled to say I was the senior guy tagged with economic responsibilities in the bureau.

Q: We know you were GLOPped when you went to Tokyo, but you were GLOPped when you went to NEA. You were GLOPped twice in a row.

PRICKETT: Yes, that's so. It was my second off-the-track assignment, really. Of course, it was possible also to say, “Well, look, I was in an economic specialty, and that sort of thing ought to be transferable”, and that's legitimate — I suppose. But I was also looking at the fact that I was a Class 3 officer, and my predecessor had been assigned to that slot when he was a Class 4 officer. I'm still talking the old designations.

Q: There was no room to move up.

PRICKETT: Well, it didn't look like it, and so they were talking, in this memo that I got with my low-ranking order, it spoke as if I was guilty of sour grapes or something and unhappy with the assignment. Well, I was questioning it; I certainly was, because I hadn't been doing badly in my career. So that was that.

I did some interesting work while I was in the NEA Bureau. I prepared a water study on the Rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra for India and Bangladesh. I learned some interesting facts about that, that if the waters of that River were not allowed to escape to the sea, that in any given season they would flood the entire area of Bangladesh to a depth of eight feet. That's an awful lot of water comes down those rivers. The Brahmaputra is the upper Ganges that flows out of China. So that was one of the things I did.

We also worked on the proposals to tax both business and diplomatic people overseas on the value of the housing that they received, and we had done this back in Tokyo and found that the private market value of our housing would probably be so high that we wouldn't be able to afford the taxes on it out of our salaries, that our salaries themselves might not equal the tax value. Well, the kind of housing that people were living in in Saudi Arabia, sometimes Quonset huts and the like, still would have such a private-sector price tag on it over there that our people and the oil companies' people and the other private business people who were living over there would be equally hard put. So those were some of the issues that we dealt with.

I didn't go out to Iran at the end of my two-year stint in NEA. I went to INR instead, and I was chief of the division that was in charge of trade and financial affairs. There was another name for it but I called it the Trade and Finance Division. And among the things that we did was to monitor the impact of our various sanctions against Iran.

On the side, another very interesting experience I had was that there was a blind chap, who had one of the GS, Civil Service, jobs in INR, who was working in my division. His name was David Conkle, very bright fellow, a graduate of the University of California

system, I forget which campus, and he had his doctorate in economics. While in California, he had had the benefit of readers provided by the State of California who would read for him and help him do his research and his studies in economics. California provided, I think, for a couple of years of service into their clients' first employment, after which they would have to handle it by themselves. David's time was just running out that he would have readers provided from the State of California, and he did something that showed, I think, great ingenuity and initiative on his part. He went over to Georgetown University, to the School of Foreign Service and advertised for readers, noting that he would not be able to pay them, but that they would have access and they would be reading highly classified stuff. They would of course have to qualify for security clearances and so forth, but he figured that he could find people over there who could afford to do the work without being paid for it and who would be sufficiently interested, who might be looking forward to Foreign Service work of their own, and who would have a chance to get inside the Department and see how things worked. And so he had two or three or four readers — a stable of readers — who would come over and spend two to four hours a day reading for him. It showed great initiative on his part. One of the things that I was very happy to do, and we worked on it the whole time I was there, and it finally came through, was to get readers hired by the State Department for David — and not only hired by the State Department but hired in the overall Departmental complement. They were also not charged, either budget-wise or as a slot, to INR, the logic being that if the Department was serious about providing equal opportunities for people with a handicap, that there shouldn't be a handicap in disguise or an impairment in disguise by loading down the bureau or the office where they were working with an extra slot. And we got that through.

Q: Good for you.

PRICKETT: On a number of occasions I had a good batting average getting promotions for the people that I wrote efficiency reports on, and getting that assistance for David. As I look back on my career, I find the fact that I was able to help other people who were working for me one of the real gratifications of the Foreign Service work. David was also

working with some folks on the technical side in the Department to do the optical scanning and put it into an artificial voice, where technology has certainly advanced tremendously since that time. We're talking, of course, of 1980 and '81. But that technology was advancing. I was acting office director for a time. Other times I was working for Mike Ely. We talked about that earlier.

Well, I would have happily stayed on in INR for another two-year tour, but that wasn't consistent with the scheme of things in Personnel in those days. Looking around the horizon, there were a couple of possibilities, both of them details out of the Department. There weren't jobs for me in EB at that time at — let's say — the assistant office director level or chief of a substantial division or whatever. One job that was available was out at Langley, working for the Agency in basically an analysis and drafting position, and the other was over at the Department of Commerce, working in the division that had been transferred from Treasury dealing with anti-dumping and countervailing duties and things, things that I had been responsible for in the State Department back in 1969 and '70. So I wound up going over to Commerce working for a fellow named Dick Self, who had been deputy chief of the office I had dealt with in Treasury before that office was transferred. Well, if I had wound up working for Dick my whole time, I'm sure it would have been pretty productive, but Dick got a job in the trade representative's office. The head of that Commerce office wasn't really interested in having a Foreign Service guy around, so I sort of cooled my heels in that office and tried to find useful things to write about. I went up to Canada and resolved a dispute about software, I think it was, a trade dispute that we'd had, and kept my eyes open for what would open up next on the personnel horizon.

As it turned out, the thing that opened up after about a year over at Commerce was the economic counselor's job in Belgrade. Since I had checked out at a 4 level in the Serbo-Croatian language after my tour in Belgrade in the '60's, had gone through the economics course at FSI and had a series of economic tours, and there were still people in positions of power and authority in Yugoslavia whom I had met, been acquainted with back in

the '60's, I had, as the personnel people said, “all the tickets” for that job. I did get the assignment. This assignment was from '82 to '85. It was a three-year tour.

So I was assigned as economic counselor to Belgrade in 1982. In preparation for that transfer, my wife, Rose, was able to get into language class at FSI in Serbo-Croatian. Being a singer, she's good with language, and was able, even though she had to interrupt her studies from time to time to go off and sing an opera someplace or whatever, she could usually come back in and catch up with the folks. She did not surpass the officers, but she did about as well as any of the dependents who were doing that language work. When we arrived in Belgrade, we had an apartment that was not in the embassy complex, and so we were out on the economy, so to speak. We were near the large marketplace. We did marketing and shopping on the economy. We weren't quite as dependent on the commissary that was down in the embassy apartment basement as some of the other folks were, although we certainly took advantage of it. So Rose was out in the town a good bit. We had a housekeeper who would come in a couple of times a week and didn't speak any English at all, and she and Rose communicated okay. Rose said there was an awful lot of pantomiming going on, and she was sure that what was being said wasn't grammatically correct most of the time, but they did understand each other.

Q: Now this servant, was it assigned to you by the government?

PRICKETT: No.

Q: So you weren't being penetrated.

PRICKETT: Oh, I don't doubt that we could well have been, but Dragica came on a recommendation from somebody else, I think from the Brits. I don't believe she had worked for Americans before. But she was in the community of folks who did work for foreigners, so she was surely known to the Interior Ministry people.

Q: Well, perhaps you'll talk about the security aspect of the assignment. Could you speak in bed? What about bugging?

PRICKETT: Oh, we assumed that we were bugged. We just assumed, which of course is what the SY people always told us to do, and there was no reason to assume otherwise. You know, the telephone would ring, and there wouldn't be anybody there, and we just assumed that people were checking to see if folks were home — so that they could come in and change the tapes or whatever. This had happened. I was aware of this, of course, from my former tour in Belgrade also, and we just assumed it was being done. We also knew that the Russians, who had their embassy on some high ground not far away, had some pretty sophisticated equipment too, but they were not hand-in-glove with the Yugoslavs by any means.

Q: They weren't sharing intelligence — to that extent.

PRICKETT: No, not unless it was to their advantage. We probably shared some stuff with the Yugoslavs on the Russians, too, just as there were military missions from both sides to Yugoslavia, and the Yugoslavs were very happily playing the man in the middle. They kept pretty good insulation. I think I may have mentioned in connection with my previous tour, we didn't learn much about the Russian equipment and their classified relations with the Russians, and they apparently didn't learn much about ours either. Our defense efforts, for instance. While their rhetoric was against the West, their defense plans were all against the East. They knew where the threat was coming from if there was to be a conflict. So yes, our domestic help may well have been interviewed from time to time, but there wasn't much to catch. There were probably microphones in our telephones and stuff like that. We just didn't think about it much because we knew to take it easy.

Q: You learned to take precautions.

PRICKETT: Yes.

Q: And Foreign Service nationals, or locals, as I guess you called them in those days, in the embassy — did they fall in the same category as your servant?

PRICKETT: Yes, with a little modification. These folks had made their careers with us from early on, and most of them we had very good reason to believe held strong loyalty towards us as employers and strong yearning towards the United States as a future place to live. I always made a point of explaining it. I hired several locals in the course of the years, first in the Commercial Section and then an economic professional later on, and I told them at the outset that whatever their protestations about not being Communist, about being more favorable towards us — I said, “I'm not going to put you in a position where you need to feel a conflict of loyalties between your loyalty to your country or your loyalty to your employer. We keep that sort of stuff separate in our embassy, and so if anybody comes around and knocks on your door and says, 'We need to know what you see, what you hear,' or whatever in the embassy, you're free to talk. The response usually was 'Well, I would never do that'.” And of course, we all know better. The kind of leverage that a government has over its citizens just makes it such that we have to assume, and that it would be wrong for us to put people in a position where they had to endanger themselves, their kids, their education, their opportunities, or their relatives to put themselves in any kind of jeopardy on our behalf. That just wasn't on, and so I made this clear to my people all the time. This, as I understand it, is the way everybody in Belgrade and in the Communist countries has dealt with the locals and their domestic servants. You make certain assumptions. It makes our life a little more inconvenient, but it saves them from really terrible circumstances.

Q: It's important, yes.

PRICKETT: Well, I was very gratified to arrive in Belgrade to be working for an old buddy from the '60's. David Anderson had been second secretary in the embassy when I was commercial attach#, and he was our ambassador. He had come from Berlin, where he had been civilian chief of our mission in Berlin, and he was good with the language, he

was well connected with the Belgrade leadership, and probably had as good — well, better — entr#e with the top Yugoslavs than any other ambassador in town. On one occasion George Kennan visited Belgrade, and Kennan had been ambassador to Yugoslavia. I mentioned that I just missed serving under him. David told us about his conversation with Mr. Kennan. He said George Kennan had asked him, “Whom do you see on a regular basis? Do you see the defense minister, for example?” “Well, not unless we have a serious issue to raise. I can see him if I have to.” “And the foreign minister?” “Well, yes.” “The trade and industry minister?” “Yes.” Kennan just looked at David and said, “You're a much more effective ambassador here than I was ever able to be.” David was good.

Q: Of course, times were different, too.

PRICKETT: Times were certainly different, no question about it, and there's certainly no question that Ambassador Kennan was doing his darnedest to make American policy encouraging to the Yugoslav position of independence and resigned because he didn't feel he was being adequately supported in that effort by Congress.

Still, David, when he had been in Belgrade back in the '60's, David was a soccer player, a very accomplished soccer player. He had come to the States, I believe, at about age 16, with his parents from Scotland. He was born in Scotland. He still had just a trace of an accent. You couldn't quite identify it. He had played in some of the industrial soccer leagues as a kid when he first came to the States. I'm digressing and talking about David because David passed away some years ago, and I don't know whether we have archives like this for him or not. But when he came to the States he played in these soccer leagues, and he said, “We'd go out and play, and then everybody would go to a bar and drink beer and fight, and that was just the way it was, so that's what I did.” David wasn't a tall guy, but he was very well put together and a tough guy. In a staff meeting one time, somebody said he wasn't sure that Washington wanted us to make this that or the other point, and David just cut the guy off and said, “I didn't come out here to tell Washington what it wants to hear. I came out here to call it like it is.” It was a thrill, really, to be working for an

ambassador like that, and David always backed up his people on the staff. One deputy assistant secretary of Commerce came out and was fussing at our officer who was in charge of airline transportation affairs because he hadn't gotten an invitation to a particular do or a dinner. He was leaning on the officer, P. J. Nichols, my deputy. Of course, we always kept Ambassador Anderson informed as to what was going on, and when David found out that this fellow was leaning on P. J., he called him up at his hotel and reamed him out very good, and said, “If it's so important to you to go to this affair, Helen and I don't need this” — Helen was his wife — “we don't need it; you can have our tickets if you want, but you will not bully my people.” David had already turned down, I think, whatever amounted to tenure in the Senior Foreign Service before he took the post. He wanted it understood that he wasn't beholden to anybody. He was a career officer, but he had not signed on to that, and he planned, I think, for this to be his final post in the Foreign Service anyway, so he was one independent SOB, and a real pleasure to work with.

We arrived at a time when the Yugoslavs were just beginning to experience a hard currency shortage and a foreign exchange crisis that the world knew so well in the cases of Mexico and Brazil, back in the first half of the 1980's. What had happened was that the Yugoslav economy had been expanding by leaps and bounds all through the '70's. They had lots and lots of bank lending, private bank lending. They'd had a lot of World Bank loans and projects, and infrastructure and big heavy industrial projects were sprouting up all over the country. They were living high on imports and were managing to keep their inflation relatively under control, because they were importing so much stuff that they had plenty to spend their money for. But being a fairly inefficient socialist economy, they were not building up their own capacity to produce the goods that all of this demand with the high incomes and the foreign credits was generating. When it came time to start paying this stuff back, they had not earned the foreign exchange that they needed to do so. They did have substantial gold reserves, but these were not to be touched. This was their stash that was to preserve the independence of the republic, after all. Nobody knew where it

was. We assumed it was in Switzerland, but the location and the exact amount of their gold reserves were deeply guarded secrets.

Q: Debt ratio — is that what we're talking about? In other words, how much should they. . . . Wasn't 20 percent the magic figure?

PRICKETT: Something in the 20s, yes. And they were well above that.

Q: They were well above that. Okay.

PRICKETT: What has become very much talked about now in the '90's was also the case then, that the foreign private banks were having such a time recycling their oil revenues that they were in a way more anxious to lend that money out than they were to examine how it would be repaid. So when countries like Yugoslavia or Mexico or Brazil or lots of others came for loans, what we had been considering way, way back in the '60's and '70's, the problem of recycling those oil revenues turned out not to be the problem. The problem was what was going to happen after those revenues got readily recycled. Yugoslavia was in such a crunch in the early 1980's, and we were going to have to reschedule their debts. Now they had a very fundamentalist attitude about rescheduling. It was a bad, dirty word. Rescheduling, refinancing — re-anything — wasn't to be even considered. The Yugoslavs actually had a good credit rating, and any refinancing or whatever they were afraid was going to endanger that, and they were very proud that they had been making regular payments. In a sense though, what they were doing was converting the income to dinars, spending it on infrastructure projects, roads and railroads and bridges, and importing a lot of industrial equipment from the West and a lot of consumer goods. And they weren't building their own export capacity nearly as much. Now they had very good agriculture, and they were getting some income from their exports to Western Europe. They had a very efficient and well-operated airline, and they also were making good income from goods transit through Yugoslavia from Western Europe down to Greece and the Middle East and back.

But they were in tough straits by 1981-82, and we were already in the business of intermediating, as it were, between the Yugoslavs and the world financial community. When the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank comes to most capitals, it steers a pretty wide path around the American embassy, being located in Washington, DC, after all, they really work against the apprehension that they are under the thumb of the US Government in Washington. In Yugoslavia, however, the situation was a little different. We had expertise that they didn't have about the country, and particularly about the people running the country and whether the negotiating positions that those people took were based in fact or whether they were just bluffing. We found that the Monetary Fund, the private bankers, the folks who came to town to do business with the Yugoslav firms or banks or to negotiate with the Yugoslav Government regularly came to see us, and so we got inside knowledge about a lot of transactions and a lot of negotiations.

The American businesses and banks and the international financial institutions relied on the American embassy to give them a perspective on their negotiations and dealings in the Yugoslav business and financial communities that didn't always happen elsewhere. In the course of some negotiations, when it finally became clear that there was going to have to be some kind of rescheduling or refinancing of Yugoslavia's foreign exchange debt — by whatever name, and they managed to keep from calling it that (I've forgotten now what the terminology was) — it would happen that the International Monetary Fund negotiators would be in town, and the representatives of the consortium of over 500 private western banks, which were led by Manufacturers Hanover (because they had the biggest exposure) would come to town, there would be negotiations that would take place from about eight o'clock in the morning until the negotiators were worn out. The Yugoslav business day usually went from seven till two (it was a six-day business week, which comes out to a 42 hour work week. Then they would retire for a huge Yugoslav business lunch, and the Yugoslav custom was that's when you went for your siesta, and then you would get up later on ready for your nightlife. Well, Ambassador Anderson had the habit of taking a fair amount of work home with him at lunch time, and it could easily

happen around two or three in the afternoon that I'd get a call: “Russell? David. Manny Hanny [meaning Manufacturers Hanover] people are coming out to the house about five o'clock this afternoon to talk about the rescheduling negotiations.” And I'd say, “Would you like PJ and me to come out about 4:30?” “Would you mind?” David would say. And so Patrick Nichols, PJ, my deputy, and I would go out at 4:30. I should say that PJ was a very able, very intelligent, very knowledgeable guy who had been an analyst over at Langley for some years, had worked on Yugoslavia, Poland and some African countries.

Q: As an FSO?

PRICKETT: No, he was hired by the Agency first, and he actually had done some documentation that was published in Congressional hearings on Yugoslavia in the '70's. Then I think he did a tour in one African country and, I believe, in Poland before his assignment. He resigned from the Agency and became an FSO, not an FSR.

Q: He became an FSO.

PRICKETT: Yes, he was an FSO. He and David were good buddies and were out there before I arrived. Parenthetically, PJ was a little concerned about this. My predecessor had apparently been nervous about the fact that here was a guy who played golf, as did David Anderson, the Scotsman, was a golfing buddy and a tennis buddy with Anderson, and maybe was closer to the ambassador than he was, the fellow who was in between as his nominal boss. PJ mentioned that to me about my predecessor's feelings, and I said, “PJ, it doesn't bother me to deal with somebody who may be brighter than I am or closer to the ambassador. I will insist that you keep me completely informed.”

Q: And it worked.

PRICKETT: Oh, yes. We had a very good teamwork. We had a lot of respect for each other and had a lot of fun together.

Q: His previous label must certainly have been known to the Yugoslavs.

PRICKETT: Sure, because he was above the line.

Q: Did this have any negative effects?

PRICKETT: No, it didn't seem to. He was also good with the language. He was a very good linguist.

Q: So you didn't have a spy on your staff, in the imagination of the Yugoslavs.

PRICKETT: If we did, it didn't seem to matter, because PJ was very well connected. He was able to talk economics with the people that he needed to talk to. He had good entr#e around town. So if they had ideas like that, they were taking them into account and figured he was a guy to deal with.

Q: Makes sense.

PRICKETT: Sure. And in fact, all PJ's work was above the line. He was a Foreign Service officer. And in fact, too, I think the Agency recognized that we had language capabilities in the legit Foreign Service that they didn't necessarily have. And we had history and connections, and so on.

At any rate, PJ and I would go over to the ambassador's place, and we'd sit out on the verandah, and presently the Manufacturers Hanover people would arrive, Povro Dobric and Maggie Mudd, the daughter of the former political counselor in Belgrade, but both very, very sharp people. Dobric was of Croatian parentage, I think it was, and they both knew the language, and they were both bankers, and they were representing this consortium of Western banks. Well, as talk would proceed, David at some point would say, “Now the people from the Fund [meaning the IMF] are coming by about 6:30 or so.” So in what could have been a regular parlor comedy, the private bank folks would arrange

to leave a few minutes before the people from the Fund were due to arrive, and then the International Monetary Fund folks would show up. Everybody was talking about what positions the Yugoslavs were taking and is there concern about possible unrest if they institute severe fiscal restraints, or monetary restraints. Is this just talk, or is there some substance to it? We would give our best analysis of the actual economics of the situation and of what popular response to such measures might be, where the Yugoslavs might have some wiggling room in negotiations and where they really didn't — either from their bosses or from the popular opinion, would be able to move. Their bosses, I may say, were not accessible to anybody. They were the members of the Presidency. These were the really old-time close confidants with Tito. They were one representative each from each of the six constituent republics and the two autonomous provinces who shared the head-of-state hat that Tito had worn when he was alive (he died in 1980). We were dealing with the first post-Tito government in Yugoslavia. It was a committee, basically, and they shared as chief of state, as commander in chief, of such responsibilities.

Q: Was there a rotating committee head?

PRICKETT: No, but the head of this committee did rotate. In other words, the presidency of the Presidency rotated periodically, but these guys were a club of old-timers, and no ambassadors saw them, with an interesting exception. David Anderson had been a soccer player, I mentioned. Back in the days when he was. . . . Alex Johnpoll was his boss back in the '60's, and David had arranged within that from time to time he could get off early in the afternoon, and he would actually go and work out with the Belgrade soccer team. Now this was a soccer team that had an international reputation, so David was one hell of an athlete to be able to do this. But he would work out with them. He didn't play in their games or anything like that, but he had their respect to that extent. And of course he had contacts. Well, now, when David came back as ambassador, he knew some guys from those days, and they knew him. David had complimentary tickets up in the box seats — we would call them the sky boxes — of the Belgrade stadium for soccer matches any time he wanted to go. He would take his wife or he would take one of us from the embassy.

Now the sky box in Belgrade was an open-air sky box. It was primitive. It was not one of the luxury boxes that they're building at the University of Texas stadium for football. The wind blew through and so forth, but you had a cover over your head if it rained. And when I was sitting up there with David, he'd point out members of the Presidency to me. He'd say that's so-and-so and that's so-and-so over there. As we came out — there were no extended conversations — but they'd wave and not and greet each other. So David was known to these guys, whether he had formal entr#e to their offices or not. That's the kind of representation we had in Belgrade when David Anderson was ambassador.

Well, it would happen then that this parlor shuffle would take place, and the Manufacturers Hanover people would leave, and the International Monetary Fund people would arrive, and we would talk out the subject. Well, then, maybe around 7:30 or eight o'clock David would say, “You know, the Yugoslav vice-premier for economic affairs has asked if he could drop by around eight or nine,” So then the Monetary Fund people would depart, and we'd have another round of visitors. Somewhere along the line, PJ and I would call home and say, Look, we're sorry about dinner, but you knew we were going over to the ambassador's tonight, and we've just moved inside off the patio, and the conversations are continuing, and David has asked his kitchen to bring us some sandwiches, and we won't be home for dinner. Sometimes it was a little easier for me because my wife, Rose, might be back in the States on an extended professional trip with musical engagements, or she sang elsewhere in Europe too. But in fact, she was gone — we figured it out — just about a third of the time that we were there, she was out of the country doing musical things.

She knew that I had my work to do, and I knew that she had her work to do. And then we'd be talking sometimes till well after midnight with the vice-premier and his assistant.

Q: It's a long day.

PRICKETT: It was a long day, and we knew that the vice-premier then had to be briefing the members of the Presidency, this august body that was Tito's heir and they had to get

the parameters of their negotiating position for the coming day before they entered into the negotiations with the Western bankers. This pattern repeated itself day after day from time to time. Of course it was a period that was very tough for the Yugoslavs. They were going through a hard time. But it was as exciting as could be for us.

Q: You were the hub of all this. . . .

PRICKETT: This would go on. . . . There were several rounds of negotiations, and so when the negotiators were coming to town, why we sort of cleared the decks and made sure that our normal business would get taken care of some way — the routine reports and the periodic reports and so on that had to get written — and make sure that somebody was available to talk to the visiting business people.

Q: How big was your staff?

PRICKETT: Let me think. I had a deputy and three other officers, one of them a junior trainee, I think. A deputy plus two. And we had a science attach# who was administratively located in the Econ Section, but his office was elsewhere and he was totally concentrating on the scientific work.

Q: Did Washington appreciate Anderson's good work?

PRICKETT: I'm sure they did.

Q: I would think they would, because that's a commendable performance.

PRICKETT: Now he and Larry Eagleburger were very close buddies.

Q: Now Larry, was he political counselor at the time?

PRICKETT: Larry was political undersecretary, I believe.

Q: Oh, you mean back in Washington.

PRICKETT: Back in Washington, yes. Larry had been number three man in the Econ Section back in the '60's. Then he had come to the Department when Kissinger came in the second Nixon Administration. Larry was deputy undersecretary, I believe, for administration and basically was Kissinger's right-hand guy. I believe he had been his assistant over in the National Security office too. Then Larry was out and then back in the government, I believe, for a time. And, oh, let me see. At any rate, he had been then assistant secretary for European affairs, he had been undersecretary for political, and then deputy secretary, and then for a brief time was Secretary of State. He wasn't Secretary of State until after the end of my career and Ambassador Anderson's career in Washington.

Q: You had a DCM in Belgrade.

PRICKETT: Yes. This was Harry Gilmore, who had served in Budapest previously and had served in Turkey and was a musician by training. His wife was an accomplished singer also, a soprano, and Harry and Carol and Rose and I made a lot of music together in the English-language church group. It happened, Harry was the keyboard guy. He was a pianist, and he had undertaken to play this harmonium, which was basically a pedal operated little squeeze organ in the small Catholic church where we met, and he had in some trips to Germany made a point of picking up music for the harmonium. There was quite a literature. And so he always had something to play for preludes and offertories and postludes for the services and so on, and from time to time, at the holidays, we would put together maybe a small chorus. We certainly did Christmas concerts. We did them at the DCM's residence, where there was a big hallway and not a spiral staircase, but a staircase with landings that, in effect, produced a spiral, and we could do a processional down those steps that could be pretty effective. So we made a lot of music together. Carol and Rose did some duet recitals in the country, down in Skopje and down at the coast and up in Zagreb. There was an American soprano who was living in Split who was really the first lady, the prima donna, of the Croatian National Opera in Split. And she

came to town and did her Belgrade Opera debut while we were there, and we gave a reception for her afterwards, and she and Rose did duet recitals as well. Her name was Cynthia Hanselbaki#. So we had musical fun on the side, and did a lot of music with the Gilmores. They were, I think, our closest friends. We were close with the Nicholses and the Andersons as well, but I think the Gilmores were our closest friends of the embassy. Sometimes it would happen with Sunday coming up, maybe on a Friday afternoon or whatever, Harry would call me on the phone or we'd meet in the hall or on the steps in the embassy, and he'd say, “Shall we get together and prepare some music for Sunday, or shall we just shake hands and blow?” This is an old jazzman's expression. Harry played jazz while he was going to school in Pennsylvania, the Carnegie-Mellon Conservatory, and so he was an old jazz buddy. We did some reviews, some musical comedy reviews and things, that I would usually direct and produce, and Harry would be the main keyboard guy. We brought in people from other embassies and had a lot of fun with this while we were there.

Well, Harry would sometimes be in on these consultations and sometimes not. Harry was always kept up to date. I kept him up to date or Ambassador Anderson did, on the negotiations. But somebody had to run the embassy while these negotiations were going on, so Harry was always in a dilemma, because when the ambassador was in town, then he expected Harry to be there as his deputy and executive officer, and when the ambassador wasn't in town, then Harry had to run the place, and the question then was when the hell did Harry get his vacation? Harry is retired now, but he was ambassador to Armenia, and it was apparently a pretty ungodly place to go, but he did good work out there, and we were all certainly glad to see him get his ambassadorship. He came out of it alive, which we couldn't say about our colleague back in the '60's, Spike Dubs, who went to Afghanistan and was shot to death in that horrible confrontation.

But it was a real pleasure and source of pride to be able to serve with such great people. We were out there trying to do good work. We had several such rounds of negotiations

and managed to help the Yugoslavs pull through their crisis — their crises — which were still threatening when my tour came to an end in 1985.

Q: Did the Yugoslavs appreciate the American role in this?

PRICKETT: At the time, they certainly did. Certainly the people that we were dealing with did. Our role was not publicized, you know. And like many other people, the Yugoslav attitude was often “what have you done for us lately?” so there's hardly any residue these days going back to 10 and 15 years ago as to what was happening then. And it's a matter of considerable chagrin that we helped them through a serious financial emergency, and they threw it all away. I guess we'll get to that a little later.

Q: Also your book might be based on that.

PRICKETT: The book, yes. Well, the book takes them up to their highest point of success.

Q: Which is?

PRICKETT: Which was January of 1990, at which point the economic reforms put in by Prime Minister Markovic really took effect and really “bit.” The trouble with that was, of course, that that meant that they put the screws on a lot of the inefficient businesses who had been spending all this money.

Q: In other words, privatization? Is that what you're saying?

PRICKETT: Well —

Q: Did they privatize much?

PRICKETT: I need to go back and talk a little bit about that. The Yugoslav socialist enterprises were not state-owned enterprises in the usual socialist sense. Their concept of social ownership was rather vague. Social ownership was kind of “in the air.” The

state was not the owner of record of the factories and such, but rather the assets were considered to be “owned” — in quotes — by the society at large, and the stewards of that society were the workers in the factories, whose job it was to represent the societal interest as well as to be the workers. They actually had elections for the officers of their enterprises. Now it was the Party who nominated the officers, so the electoral process wasn't something that we would recognize as being open and democratic.

Q: Do you recall any trade unions?

PRICKETT: No, because, you see, they didn't need trade unions. They were the owners. But what was meant was that the workers' councils, as they were called, represented the workers' collective. The workers' collective amounted to everybody who worked in the outfit, from the guy who swept up the floors at night, the guys that worked on the lathe or the machine shop or the assembly line, and the guy in the front office who wore a white shirt and met with the foreign executives who came to town. They were all members of the workers' collective. The workers' collective, then, elected a workers' council, which had and exercised functions that were comparable to both that of a very tough labor union and of a very interested board of directors representing shareholders.

Q: But the council was nominated by the party.

PRICKETT: The workers' council was elected, actually, by the workers, from people who were already there. But when they then hired the managers, the directors, those were the people who were nominated — which read “installed” —

Q: Fascinating.

PRICKETT: Now what we saw, in fact, was a complete spectrum of this system operating extremely well and quite democratically, of the system operating very well but very autocratically, being run from the top by a tough Party boss, and not being run well at all. So some of these outfits were making money and were doing very well, and some were

not. Now there again, the Yugoslav Communist theory said that you didn't have to have welfare, because you didn't have unemployment. But what this meant was that all the enterprises had to hire everybody. They had to provide jobs. If an enterprise was losing money, they would often force mergers with enterprises that were good money-makers, so that the efficient outfits would have to take the inefficient ones in under their umbrella. This had a dumbing-down or an averaging-down effect on the overall economy that was really too bad. You could imagine this in theory, and we could sort of sympathize with the theory back in the '60's, when this quasi-independence of the businesses was just coming into being. By the '80's, when it had been around for a long time, we could see that sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't, and it depended more on the individuals in charge and, after all, whether the business was a logical one to be operating in that country or not.

Q: Yes.

PRICKETT: For instance, Belgium and Switzerland and a number of European countries don't make cars. They buy their cars from somebody else. Well, the Yugoslavs were determined they were going to make cars, and the example that came over to this country sort of represents what kind of cars they made. What they did was they made a car off of an outdated license from Fiat in Italy. That's basically what the Yugo was. And it provided necessary transportation and filled a real need in Yugoslavia, but it wasn't about to compete in the American market or anywhere in Europe. And they tried hard to make it compete, but it wasn't working.

Well, at any rate, that was the picture of ownership, and it wasn't state-ownership in the usual sense. So some Yugoslavs argued that they didn't have to privatize. But when they did get around to considering privatization, it took a different form.

I had mentioned the financial straits that the Yugoslavs were in and the government-to-government and the government-to-bank and the government-to-international financial institution negotiations that they carried out. Well, there were private-sector implications

to their financial straits also. American and European creditors on the commercial side — not just bankers — weren't getting their money, weren't being paid. One such example was the Douglas Aircraft Corporation, which had supplied the bulk of the Yugoslav Airlines' civil air fleet. They were being paid regularly, and the Ex-Im Bank was getting it's money, for the airplanes themselves, but Douglas had a service contract with JAT, Yugoslav Airlines, to service their planes at many, many locations around the world. Yugoslav Air served the United States, Australia, and most of the European countries. They flew to Africa and Asia. They were an extensive airline, and they were a money-maker. Their pilots were very accomplished. So they were a very well-respected organization, and they flew American planes. I'd say that there were times when Douglas and Boeing were in very stiff competition with Airbus to provide planes for Yugoslav airlines, and we worked pretty hard on behalf of the Americans. Obviously we couldn't take sides between Boeing and Douglas, which of course combined much later, but we did manage to freeze out Airbus, even though the German former defense minister was down there throwing his weight around.

Douglas wasn't getting its money for servicing Yugoslav Airlines planes, and they Yugoslavs were in arrears by several millions of dollars. I got a call from John Wallace, who was Douglas' chief sales representative for Europe, and the guy who usually came to Yugoslavia with the latest word on new airplanes that Douglas was developing or just to keep Douglas in the mind of the Yugoslav Air people. He was very effective in that way. I had first met him back in the '60's, when the Douglas DC-9 replaced the Caravel in the Yugoslav fleet. At any rate, I got a call from him one afternoon inviting me to dinner over at the Intercontinental Hotel that evening. I went, and he was there with a team of people from Douglas who wanted to know what our ambassador would say if they, Douglas, told the Yugoslavs that they had to get their money or they would stop servicing the airplanes — which would have the effect of shutting down Yugoslav Airlines. I told John and his people that I thought the ambassador would say the same thing that I was about to say, which was, if they really believe you, you'll get your money. Well, they had

an appointment to see the ambassador the next morning at 10 or 11 o'clock, and of course the ambassador asked me to attend the meeting, too. They put the question to him, and he put the answer to them. I'm sure he would have given that answer with or without my briefing, but of course I had briefed him. And he said, “If they believe you, you'll get your money.” They were concerned would this interfere with the bilateral relations between the countries. They were very conscientious about their relations with the US Government, and the ambassador made the point that we did not have any foreign policy objectives that would conflict with their getting money in their legitimate commercial transactions. So then they started negotiations with the Yugoslavs and with Yugoslav Airlines. The Yugoslavs were hurting for hard currency at the time, but Yugoslav Airlines was a hard currency money-maker. Well, like a number of families, I guess, in the Depression or immigrant families to the US or whatever, they had to keep close watch on their pennies and figure would whom pay and which creditors they could afford to make wait a while and which ones they had to pay, and Douglas was getting to the head of the line by making some noise. They worked out a two-tranche arrangement to bring themselves up to date on these payments. The first tranche was to be paid while the negotiators were in Belgrade, and the second tranche was to be paid two or three weeks later, and that would bring them up to par. So this agreement was reached, and the Douglas negotiators went back to California, and all was well — we thought. One Tuesday afternoon, I got a call, and it was John Wallace on the telephone from Long Beach, California, and he said, “Russ, they didn't make their second payment, and we're not coming back. If we don't have our money by Friday, we are going to shut them down.” Well, I had my work cut out for me. It was Tuesday afternoon.

Q: You were caught in the middle, weren't you?

PRICKETT: The following day, the Wednesday. . . . I mean, the rest of the day, my secretary and I worked, and we wrote a bunch of letters. We wrote a letter to the director of Yugoslav Airlines. We wrote a letter to the president of the National Bank of Yugoslavia. We wrote a letter to the head of the so-called Industrial Bank of Yugoslavia, which was

the bank that had direct relations with Yugoslav Airlines. First thing the next morning I was on the phone making appointments and I was running all over Belgrade. My first stop was Yugoslav Airlines. The vice-president for financial affairs came out of a board meeting to meet with me, and when I told him what the problem was, he said, “We were just meeting on that very subject, and you need to talk to our bankers, because we have been paying into our bank.” We've been making the payments that are owed, and it's the banks that haven't been forwarding the money to Douglas Aircraft.” I said, “Well, I'm going to the National Bank next, and I'm headed over to the Industrial Bank.” “Well,” he said, “you need to go to the Belgrade Union Bank as well, because the Industrial Bank is a subsidiary of the Belgrade Union Bank.” Well, I learned this, as I said, when I was already at the Yugoslav Airlines. So somewhere along the line, while I was on the run, I got another copy made of my letter. I went over to the National Bank. After dropping my letter off and leaving my message and making my pitch there, I called my secretary back at the embassy and I said, “I need you to do something for me. I need you to call the Belgrade Union Bank and talk to the president's secretary.” The president of the Belgrade Union Bank was a man named Slobodan Milosevic. I said, “I want you to apologize for the short notice. I don't even know whether Mr. Milosevic is in town, but I need to see him very, very urgently on a most important matter, and I will be at the Belgrade Union Bank at 12 o'clock noon today.” I had no idea what would happen, but my secretary was a good secretary, and she made the call. I went from the National Bank to the Industrial Bank. The president of the Industrial Bank was a man that I had known, a young fellow — or I considered him a young fellow because he was about my age — who was rising in the Party. He was with one of the trading companies back in the '60's, so I had known him. He wasn't in town, and I left my letter and my message with somebody else and then went across the main square in Belgrade to the Albania Building, where the headquarters of the Belgrade Bank was, and in the lobby — I walked in a 12 o'clock — and there in the lobby Mr. Milosevic's secretary met me and took me up to his office. Milosevic welcomed me, brought me into his office, sat me down. The custom in business calls in Yugoslavia back in the '60's had been to offer a wide variety of refreshments. There would be a choice of

different kinds of fruit juice, which were always delicious. They were thick with the pulp of the fruit. And there'd be mineral water, and there'd be Turkish coffee, but there would also be some hard stuff, some slivovitz (plum brandy), often double-distilled plum brandy (perpecenica, they called it), or there would be what they called lozovac, which was a double distilled wine brandy. It was totally clear in appearance but packed a real punch. So I came in, and Mr. Milosevic asked, “Would you like some refreshment?” He asked me in English, and I answered him in Serbian: “Ne kisok, mo?da.” He said, “Oh, won't you have something stronger?” I said, “Mo?e, jedne lozo.” Perhaps then this lozovac, this wine brandy. And then he said, “Do you know our Viljamovka?” I didn't know what that was, and he said, “It's a pear brandy.” And this is also this double-distilled stuff, which was like the lozovac. It was your basic white lightning but with an aftertaste of fresh pears. That was my first acquaintance with what is I think still my most favorite brandy drink. It's really something.

Q: Like Poire William.

PRICKETT: That's exactly what it is. Viljamovka, the poire William or pear William, Wilhelmsbirne in German — it's the standard —

Q: It is sweet.

PRICKETT: Not sweet.

Q: I mean it's good.

PRICKETT: Not sweet. It's a really strong drink, but it has the aftertaste of the fresh pears, unlike some of the other, you know, syrupy brandy drinks. At any rate, that's my digression. I did pick up two bottles of that on my way home from the office that very day and have always tried to find some when I've been back in the country or, for that matter, back in Europe since.

Well, then we got down to business, and Milosevic called into his office his executive vice-president, a woman named Vorka Vucic. She's a neighbor of ours. We had known her. She was just about every American banker's favorite Yugoslav banker. When they came to town they wanted to talk to Vorka. She looked like the Wicked Witch of the West. She was dark-haired. She wore black all the time. She was a widow. And she had very sharp, witch-like features, lovely sparkling eyes, a beautiful voice, and an almost angelic personality. We were neighbors, and we saw each other socially from time to time — wonderful woman, very, very bright. And she's the woman, by the way — I think — who set up the Belgrade Bank and Milosevic's stash offshore on Cyprus, prior to the present-day troubles. So she, for all her sweetness, was some tough cookie.

At the time, I saw her experience and that of other women who were rising by merit in the Yugoslav system as perhaps foretelling a more general improvement in the position of women as executives. There were a number of women, other bankers — more in the banks than in the industrial companies.

I laid out the problem as the Douglas Aircraft people had laid it out to me, and I told her about my calls around town, and particularly that the vice-president for finance of Yugoslav Air had told me they'd been making their payments, that they, Yugoslav Air, did not have hard currency shortage and they were not happy about the possibility of being shut down because their bills weren't being paid. “Well,” she said — and I had mentioned the Friday deadline set by Douglas — and she said, “I don't think we can have it all by Friday, but we can have something over a third of it by Friday and the remainder on a Monday.” I said, “I can't speak for the company, but I'll tell them what you said.” And we both knew that that was going to be just fine, that if Douglas knew they'd have their money by Monday, all of it, and that there would be earnest payment of good faith by Friday, that that would be a satisfactory conclusion. Indeed, they did make the payment, and they didn't shut them down, and I thought I learned something about Milosevic and his people at that point. Number one, that my first advice had been correct — if they really believe you, you will

get your money; secondly, that he will push the envelope just as damned far as he can; and third, that when he sees that that's as far as he can push it, that that's the end of the matter. Now I think there have been times in the more recent adventures in Yugoslavia that that lesson could have been applied. Right now, when there have been such heavy commitments to war, I'm not sure whether a point of no return has been passed or not. But I learned on that occasion that, number one, Milosevic couldn't be bluffed, but number two, he could be coerced.

Q: As in the Bosnia case.

PRICKETT: I'm convinced of it. I'm convinced that if. . . . Well, before Bosnia, really, in 1991, and I guess this is as good a time to expound on this as any, when the Yugoslav national army first crossed the borders into Croatia, ostensibly to insert itself between the Croats and Serbs who were engaged in local fighting inside Croatia, that was a time for those of us who knew the country to get the ear of our leaders and put forward a United States position, basically to strong-arm our NATO allies into imposing a blockade on what was then still one single country. Hungary and Romania had been making noises about wanting to get closer to NATO. We could have said, “Here's how you make your bones, boys. You close off all the land border crossings between yourselves and Yugoslavia, and you help us close off the Danube.” The Sixth Fleet would steam into the Adriatic and put a cork in all the Yugoslav ports, and NATO air forces would start patrolling the country and make a total no-fly zone out of all of Yugoslavia. Now we would have had to, as I said, tell our NATO allies, “We're going to do this, and you can come along with us or not, but this is a European problem. We have interests in Europe, and if you want it solved, you come along with us. If you want to muddle around and let it go to hell, then that's your affair.” Once with NATO on board, we would have said to the United Nations, “If you want to be relevant, you'll bless this operation; if you don't, you wash your hands of it and fade into history.” However, we had just won a smashing victory, we thought, in Desert Storm, and our good President figured he was on his way to reelection on the strength of that, and it would have been a very difficult, very touchy prospect to try to persuade

the American people that we ought to get that involved in a country that they knew that little about — and cared less. Now, of course, we're facing much more difficult prospects, and as any of us know when we see something on the horizon that troubles us, we know that things will get worse if we don't do something about it at the time. Sometimes, we speak up, and sometimes our advice is heeded, and sometimes not. Now I was long out of the Department by that time, and I was not burning up the wires to Larry Eagleburger to say, “This is what we ought to do?” Frankly, I thought, How could Larry be missing the point? My own daughter was in Belgrade at the time. It wouldn't have been easy to slam a blockade on the country. But it was what we needed to do, and I'm convinced that when nothing happened. . . . First the Yugoslav army crossed the border into Croatia; then there was a pause. And when nothing happened except a lot of talk in New York, then they moved on, and I can just imagine the wolfish grin on Milosevic's face as that happened.

Q: Because he had his —

PRICKETT: He knew us pretty well.

Q: He knew us pretty well, yes.

PRICKETT: So at any rate, back in the days when it was just a few million dollars at stake, I helped back him down, and I have to say I wish I had been over there to talk to the guy on a few subsequent occasions and had had the kind of backup that I got from my ambassador when I was over there at that time. Well, that was one of them. I mentioned that we had negotiated with Yugoslav Airlines to be the suppliers of their next round of aircraft. This time it was the Boeing 737 and the 757 that were to replace those old DC-9's. I can't remember the name of the German former defense minister, Bavarian, I think he'd been president of Bavaria [Franz Josef Strauss?] too, but he was representing the Airbus consortium, and he was down in Yugoslavia throwing his weight around too. But the Yugoslavs had had a good history of dealing with American airplane manufacturers, and they went with Boeing. This was shortly before Boeing took over Douglas. So we got

some pictures where several of us, including our ambassador and the representative of the Ex-Im Bank and the Boeing people and the Yugoslav negotiators, the Yugoslav Airline people, were signing the deal to buy a bunch of 737's. I think that pretty well sums up the highlights of my second Belgrade tour.

Let's pop back in time just a little bit. During the financial negotiations, Larry Eagleburger returned to Belgrade on a visit. I think it had to do with the financial negotiations, but at any rate, he came back. He had been ambassador previously, and he was either undersecretary for political affairs or assistant secretary for European affairs at the time of his return visit in '82 or '83, I believe. At any rate, he had a meeting with the prime minister, which the ambassador and I accompanied him to. The prime minister was Milka Planic, a Croatian woman, whom people were comparing to Margaret Thatcher. The Yugoslavs would say, “She's our Margaret Thatcher.” She was a pretty effective leader, but the prime minister's powers had been diminished. She was the first prime minister after Tito's death, and so we and other countries were anxious to, number one, see how effective she would be and to help her to keep the country together. People had feared what might happen when Tito died. Well, like so many other projects, it just took longer than we thought it would before the country came apart, a little over 10 years.

Well, before going over to see Mrs. Planic, Larry had a meeting with the embassy staff, especially the local staff, with whom he was very, very popular. This was in the main meeting room in the American Club. I think it was called the Elbrick Room, as a matter of fact, after the ambassador who had been there when I was there earlier. And Larry stood I the middle of the room, and everybody else made a great big circle around him, standing — there wasn't room to seat everybody — and he went round one at a time greeting everybody. First, he made a little speech, and he was sort of theater in the round, turning to one side and then to the other, talking to everybody, partly in English, partly in Serbian — mostly in English with a few Serbian expressions. His language was pretty good. Then he greeted everybody affectionately, going around from one to the other. There was a very close personal affection that all the Yugoslavs in the embassy had for Larry. And he was

very funny in his remarks. He was bringing greetings from various people, and he said, “My sons greet you, who are taller than I am, and my wife greets you — “ and I said, “ — who's prettier than you are.” He turned over and pointed his finger at me, and said, “I'll take care of you, Prickett.” You know, it was a buddy-buddy kind of thing, and Larry was a lot of fun, a lot of fun to work with and deal with. And then after this love fest, we got into the ambassador's car and drove across the river to New Belgrade, to the prime minister's office, and on the way, Larry said, “If I'd had to kiss another mustache, I don't know what I would have done,” because kissing on both cheeks is the Yugoslav form of greeting, men and women — men and men, women and women, and so forth. And the Serbs do it three times for good luck. And then he had a very good meeting with Mrs. Planic carried on in her language. She did not have English. So sometimes, Larry would need to glance over to David, who would usually supply the missing word, or I would maybe. They were both as good in the language as I was, and I had a good rating and was helping. Later on, when the vice-premier for economic affairs came to Washington — in fact, it was during the tour; I was back for that visit, and his name, by the way, was Zgonej Dragan — when Zgonej Dragan was in Washington when Larry was undersecretary he called on Larry, among others, and they spoke entirely in Serbo-Croatian. And I was there taking notes, and half the State Department was looking over my shoulder afterwards saying, “What did he say?” So one of the anecdotes I wanted to include, was Larry's visit.

Well, I returned to Washington in 1985. I had not gotten a promotion that would have taken me into the Senior Foreign Service, and so I had one year left, despite three successive years of absolutely top ratings. And so I could not count on more than one year left in the Department. And so when my three top preferences for my next assignment, one, two, and three, were all to the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service, somebody said, well, there's the position now of, I think it was, deputy chief of the Finance Division in the Office of Economic Affairs, which is the plum job, really, at that rank, and I thought, I'm sorry, fellows, I'm not going to have a job that I have take home with me at night, that I have to

worry about. If I've got one year left, I'm going to go where I can do good work and walk home at night and leave it at the office. So that's what I did.

Q: The Board of Examiners.

PRICKETT: Yes. I was in BEX then for my last year in the Service. My wife, meanwhile, had been hired to teach voice at the University of Texas at Austin, so our plan was that she would try it out, and I would live in our house on Calvert Street in Washington, DC, for the year that she had been hired for, and if she was hired on the tenure track, why then I would consider moving down here to Austin, Texas, and that's the way things worked out.

Meanwhile, I had joined an organization called the US-Yugoslav Economic Council. This was basically an organization of US businesses who had interests in dealing with Yugoslavia. Dick Johnson, a retired Foreign Service officer, had just been named executive director of this organization, and I had joined it as a private member, I figured to do some consulting, and also had by that time embarked on the project of writing a book about the economic relations between the two countries together with former Foreign Service officer and University of Maryland professor John Lampe and Professor Ljubisa Adamovic of the University of Belgrade. So that effort was underway. I wanted to maintain contact with these business guys, whom I interviewed extensively for the book. And also I wanted to smoke out any possible consulting work that I could do. The nice thing about the organization was also that it had annual meetings, usually in Dubrovnik but sometimes in Split and sometimes in Bled, which is an Alpine lakeside town up in Slovenia. Split is a town also on the Adriatic which has extensive Roman ruins — gorgeous place. The entire Adriatic coast is just heavenly, it's just wonderful. We've been back there on a number of occasions, usually in connection with meetings at the Council. So I became an active member of the Council and served on its board of directors for several years after my tour of duty in Belgrade.

I had a couple of strong nibbles on some consulting work that grew in part out of the experience with the council and in part out of the experience of writing the book. One, which came directly from the Council, was with Mobil Oil Corporation. There had been a bit of offshore exploratory drilling in the Adriatic Sea, for possible oil reserves. Other oil and gas reserves had been found up in northern Yugoslavia, but the geological layout offshore was such that the companies expected there might be some substantial reserves there, too, especially off the southern Adriatic coast, off the coast of Montenegro. Mobil Oil was interested in this. Through a neighbor in Washington, whose sister worked for Mobil, I talked with them and went over and made a little presentation about Yugoslavia to some of their officers who were considering this project, and they asked me for a proposal, which I gave them, and they were ready to have me on their negotiating team for a month or more or however long it took, which would have been good consulting work. However, the rumbles in 1990 were already being heard that the country was in tension, and actually people had even used the word civil war. I raised this point at one of the meetings of the Council — I think it was in Split — because when people started talking like this, Mobil just pulled back instantly, and their plans to go over and negotiate were completely withdrawn. They wound up doing a deal in Vietnam, if you can imagine. Well, now it's easy to imagine when we look at what's going on in Yugoslavia, but in those days, Vietnam had such history to it that the idea that a company would pull out of Yugoslavia and go to Vietnam was sad. I made the point. I said, “You're losing investment possibilities here. Clients don't like to hear talk about possible civil war.” Well, some old diehard Communist got up and excoriated me on the floor of the meeting — these are joint meetings, of course, with the Yugoslav Chamber of Commerce and their wing for foreign dealings, and specifically their section for dealings with the US, and so we were always meeting with Yugoslav counterparts. But that was one of the things that happened in connection with the Council.

Then later on, when we first put sanctions on Yugoslavia, on the truncated Yugoslavia, after the Croats and the Slovenes and the Bosnians and the Macedonians had seceded, among the things that happened as a result of our sanctions was that the US Department

of the Treasury froze both financial assets and other physical assets that were in the control of the United States, and this included ships that were in American ports. A law firm in New Orleans was trying to get the Yugoslav ships out from under these sanctions. The wording of the Treasury's decree pertained to state-owned assets, assets owned by the state of Yugoslavia. Now my familiarity with the peculiar structure of the Yugoslav socialist enterprises dated way back to the 1960's, when I had sort of been the resident scholar on that subject, and so somebody referred them to me. And I wrote a brief and was prepared to testify and everything like that on behalf of he Yugoslav ships — not that it would have mattered a whole lot. The Treasury could have simply reworded their decree. But the law firm that was handling it was interested, anyway, and what they finally took was my affidavit. I didn't go to New Orleans to testify. I would have enjoyed the trip. The court ruled in Treasury's favor, and that was that. But I was still right.

Q: Yes, of course. You're on record, anyway.

PRICKETT: Yes. It took me a while to get my fee for that piece of work because the law firm was asking me to wait until they got paid by the Yugoslav firm, and I had to stress with them that I had not taken the job on a contingency fee basis, that I had agreed to work for them on a time basis. They kept putting me off until I wrote to the Louisiana Bar Association, and then I got a very quick answer, and their letter, which accompanied their check, seemed to express some very hurt feelings on their part — but I got my check.

Another consulting job that I had came from a pharmaceutical executive in California. I don't know whether I mentioned this earlier or not —

Q: No, I don't think so.

PRICKETT: But he was interested in the process of privatizing Yugoslav enterprises. His company had purchased an interest in — and that's too complicated to go into here — but they had purchased an interest in a Yugoslav pharmaceutical manufacturer, and he was interested in the privatization process and in proposals for how enterprises could

be privatized, how these particular peculiar socialist enterprises in Yugoslavia could be privatized. He had asked the ambassador who succeeded David Anderson, John Scanlan — another Minnesota guy, by the way — who might be able to do this work for him, and John had referred him to Professors Adamovic and Lampe and me, the authors of this book, as being qualified to do this work. Well, both Adamovic and Lampe had full-time jobs, and I was retired, and so I shared about a third of the fee with them, to put their names on it. I did the traveling, the interviewing, the conceptual analysis, and the writing, and I ran it past them for their editing and approval and so forth, and then sent the bill as well as the product to the client in California, whose name was Milan Panic. A few days after I delivered the product to Mr. Panic in California, he accepted the position of prime minister of Yugoslavia. That's who Panic was. He took the job, frankly, trying to stop the war, which had by then advanced into Bosnia, and eventually Milosevic forced him out. Milosevic was president of Serbia at that time and was in the process of consolidating Serbian control over the federal government, which — again, not to get into all the messy details — basically he was emasculating the powers of the federal government at the same time that he was asserting Serbian control over them. And this was what had been forcing, what eventually forced the secession by first the Slovenes and then the Croats, and then the others, Bosnia and Macedonia, because they saw that gradually they were being painted into a corner, and what was happening was a return of the old pan-Serbianism that, to them, resonated of the old days of the monarchy. If Milosevic would not negotiate a looser confederation with more autonomy and more voice in the federal affairs for the constituent republics, then they were going to opt out. So that's basically what happened.

So that sort of concludes my reflections on Yugoslavia. I came back to the States, as I said, into the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service. It was fun, really, dealing with the young people who were interested in Foreign Service work, and the daily routine of the examination cycle and our review of records and all of that, was interesting and fun. It had to be done on a collegial basis, on a consensus basis, which meant that all of our

negotiating skills came into play again. Our evaluating skills came into play. We had the sense that we were helping improve the stream of the folks coming into the Service. It was a good way, I think, to conclude a career in the Service. It's easy to have regrets that I didn't get that last promotion and stuff like that, but it would be hard also to imagine a more satisfying final tour of duty than what I had, working with Harry Gilmore and Ambassador Anderson and the really good work that we were able to do over there, even though the Yugoslavs didn't take advantage of it. And it would have been a tough act to follow. So looking back, I found it to be a good career, and I had the opportunity then, for the next couple of years, to put the cap on it by taking part in writing this book, Yugoslav-American Economic Relations Since World War II. I wrote the introduction; I wrote the chapter on the commercial dealings; I wrote the chapter on the financial dealings, “Paying the Piper,” I called it; and because I was the guy without a full-time job, I was the final editor of the whole text. And I have to say that Professor Adamovic's English didn't always flow, and also his successive subchapters didn't always track. I was sure that he had graduate students or others who were writing pieces because every now and again we'd reinvent the wheel as we went along. So there was a lot of rewriting to do, and we spent a lot of time on the telephone with each other, and we had several meetings in Maryland, where John Lampe lived, in Florida, where Professor Adamovic taught regularly at Florida State — every spring he'd come over — and here in Austin. That put a very satisfactory cap on the career. As I imagine, Stu is finding a lot of the retired officers are finding this experience to be a good way to reflect and feel good about what you've done.

Would I do it all over again? Probably I would. I might choose to take an advanced degree in economics rather than a law degree. But my law degree was very helpful too.

Q: Of course.

PRICKETT: Especially in consular work and just the sense that technicalities don't baffle you. It was useful to the mental processes to be able to handle things. I got good training in economics at the Foreign Service Institute and then the University of Oklahoma.

Meanwhile, it's been very rewarding to come here to Austin. As I think I mentioned, my wife, Rose Taylor, was hired to teach voice here at the University of Texas, and she came down here for an academic year while I was spending that last year of my career in Washington. She was hired on the tenure track, and so I came down to live with her, and a few years later she actually got the tenure. And then a couple of years ago, she reached the rank of full professor. She's found that rewarding while she's still able to continue her performing career in opera and concerts. I've been doing some singing. For as long as I can remember, I sang with the Paul Hill Chorale at the Kennedy Center in Washington, and I've been singing in the Austin Lyric Opera Chorus since I came here. I've done some musical theater and some Shakespeare in the Park and some small roles with the Lyric Opera, and I'm enjoying the life. The climate is hard to beat except in the summertime, and then it's always possible to travel. I'm looking forward to being in the Washington probably in June of this year, where three of my four daughters live. I hope to see Stu Kennedy while I'm there. And I've enjoyed this, Lou.

Q: Well, it's been my pleasure.

PRICKETT: Thanks for the coffee, thanks for the cookies, and thanks for the sympathetic ear.

Q: I just wish we'd served together. You would have been a good colleague. Shall we cut it off on a high note like that?

PRICKETT: I think so.

End of interview